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Dissonance and Image In Teacher Training

BY

Lynda Carol Grant

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

Counselling Psychology

Department of Educational Psychology

Edmonton, Alberta.

Spring, 1993

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled DISSONANCE AND IMAGE IN TEACHER TRAINING submitted by LYNDA CAROL GRANT in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY.

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Dr. H. Zingle

DATE: Jan. 26/93

"In Memory of My Mum and Dad"

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the teacher-training experience from the students' perspective. The study design was based on a grounded theory approach. Data were collected through formal in-depth semi-structured interviews with 14 fourth year University of Alberta Education students. Analysis of the data showed that student teachers have preconceptions or beliefs that they bring to their study of teaching. They have an image or dream of teaching and an image of "self" as teacher. A three phase basic psychosocial process emerged from the data. Throughout the preservice stage of teacher development the students experienced dissonance, reacted to the dissonance, and reformulated their image of teaching and "self" as teacher.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the teacher-training experience from the students' perspective. The following questions were approached through the use of indepth interviews: What was the "lived" experience of education students throughout their coursework and practicum? Was there a common process that students go through in becoming teachers? What did the students perceive to be important or detrimental to their teacher education?

The study represents an effort to hear the voices of student teachers in order to understand their "lived" educational experience. An understanding of the teacher-training experience from the perceptions of the student is one of many steps to developing strategies for a more effective teaching/learning experience in education programs.

B. Need for the Study

Teaching is considered to be a highly stressful profession (Farber, 1991, Cadiz, 1989, and Gold, 1985). Williams (1986) says that 50% of teachers-in-training enter and remain in the school system for 3 years. Those who

remain are at risk for disability due to accident, chronic illness or stress related conditions (Jevne and Zingle, 1991). Several authors suggest the seeds of teacher burnout are sown by teacher preparation that is insufficient or inappropriate to promote personal well-being and career satisfaction (Cadiz, 1989, Jevne and Zingle, 1991, and Cassel, 1984).

This raises the question of whether teacher-training programs prepare individuals for the reality of teaching. The first year of teaching is considered the most difficult in a teacher's career (Dunbar, 1981). The novice teacher brings certain characteristics to the school situation which in large part determine how the first year is experienced. The teacher's personal history, the teacher-training experience and expectations of what teaching will be like all have a tremendous impact on future teaching experiences.

There appears to be a gap between the perceived preparedness of education graduates and what is needed to have more control and self-efficacy in the first year of teaching. The gap between the student teacher preparedness and what is needed for successful teaching may account for the fact that one out of four students who complete a teacher training program may never begin teaching, or will fail to last more than 5 years (Peters, 1990).

Secondary questions important to this study are: what are the students' expectations about their future role as

teachers after completing their teacher education programs? Do they feel adequately prepared for their role as teachers? Does the process of their teacher-training experience influence their later development as teachers? The present study investigates the students' perspective of their entire teacher-training experience and looked at their perceptions of the relevance of the experience to their future development as educators.

C. Significance of the Study

There is a dearth of literature in the area of teacher education which attempts to understand the students' perceptions of their educational experience. No studies were found which look at the entire teacher training experience from the student's point of view.

The information gained from this study can be utilized by teacher training professionals to better understand the perspectives and needs of the students. The information can be used to develop strategies for more effective teaching in education programs.

Student teachers can utilize the data in this study to help normalize their experience in the practicum. The data can sensitize them to possible problem areas and therefore enable them to be more prepared for these problems.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter the literature thought to be relevant to the study will be reviewed. Areas of research considered potentially useful are: Teacher burnout and the preparation of student teachers; professional growth among preservice teachers; models of teacher development during student teaching; the subject matter preparation of teachers; some changes experienced during student teaching; teacher socialization prior to and during teacher education; stress in student teaching; and needs of student teachers. A second literature review conducted after the analysis of results follows in chapter 5.

A. Teacher Burnout and the Preparation of Student Teachers

Several authors suggested that the seeds of teacher burnout are sown by teacher preparation that is insufficient or inappropriate to promote personal well-being and career satisfaction (Jevne and Zingle, 1991, Cadiz, 1989, Cassel, 1984, Kells, 1982, Saunders and Watkins, 1980, and Wendt, 1980).

Cadiz (1989) said that the realities of the teaching profession are often the result of distortions created at least partially by educational institutions. Teacher training institutions exalt the ideals of educational

philosophy and provide service related training as a mere appendage. Cadiz suggested that colleges and universities need to respond to the findings associated with self-efficacy theory, and work behavior in order to improve teacher education. Cadiz said that teachers need to be inoculated against burnout beginning in their training. Inoculation should include strategies for coping with job related stress.

Wendt (1980) suggested that education programs can alleviate teacher stress by adequately preparing beginning teachers for their roles. This would include providing accurate role exploration and definitions, supplying stress situations under laboratory conditions in student teaching and helping student teachers deal with structured and unstructured situations through simulations. Kepner et al. (1982) suggested that through field experiences, student teaching experience and supportive counselling in the beginning years, the adjustment to the teaching profession can be effectively monitored.

Bischoff (1983) recommended improving teacher education programs by involving simulation/experience in large group instruction, information about the role of the community and the schools, and experience with individuals of different cultural/ethnic backgrounds.

B. Models of Teacher Development During Student Teaching

Fuller and Brown (1975) proposed a four stage developmental model of teacher concerns in the process of becoming a teacher. In the first stage, the preteaching stage, preservice teachers identify realistically with pupils but only in fantasy with teachers. In the second stage, concerns centre on survival as teachers on, for example, concerns about class content and mastery of content to be taught. In the third stage, teachers have concerns about their teaching performance and about limitations and frustrations of the teaching situation. In the fourth stage teachers are concerned about the learning, social and emotional needs of the pupils and their own ability to relate to pupils as individuals.

Sitter and Lanier's (1982) research on student teachers supports the work of Fuller in that commonalities of concern were expressed by people engaged in the process of learning to teach. However the commonalities did not occur in clusters and did not occur sequentially. Concerns about self, survival, teaching tasks, pupil learning, materials and curriculum development occurred simultaneously and were dealt with concurrently by student teachers. The student-teaching experience was perceived as a time to consolidate the concerns into a whole; a time to "put it all together".

Sacks and Harrington (1982) labelled six stages of development as students prepare for and move through

student-teaching: a) anticipation b) entry c) orientation d) trial and error e) integration/consolidation and f) mastery.

Carusa (1977) based on his work with student teachers in seminars and his reading of student logs, proposed a model of phases of feelings that student teachers had about themselves and about their experiences as they continued in student teaching. The phases are not mutually exclusive and there is much overlap. The phases are labelled a) anxiety b) confusion/clarity c) competence/inadequacy d) criticism/new awareness e) more confidence/greater inadequacy and f) loss/relief.

C. Subject Matter Preparation of Teachers

Until recently the subject-matter knowledge of teachers was taken for granted in teacher education (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990). In recent years research has focussed on the ways in which student teachers understand the subjects they teach. Data reveal that they often have misconceptions or gaps in knowledge similar to those of their pupils (eg. Mansfield, 1985, McCloskey, 1983).

Work has also been reported on the subject-matter conceptions and intellectual histories of preservice teachers. A research group at Stanford University has documented the continuing influence of subject-matter knowledge on teaching conceptions and teacher behaviour (eg.

Ringstaff & Haymore, 1987; Wilson & Shulman, 1987; Wilson & Wineburg, 1988). Grossman (1987) demonstrates how both the depth and the character of a beginning English teacher's subject matter knowledge influenced her classroom teaching.

Ball and McDiarmid (1990) suggested that although teachers' knowledge about learning, the curriculum, pedagogy and the context seems to increase with practice there is no evidence that they learn about their subject matter by teaching it. According to common belief, graduating teachers lack adequate subject-matter preparation (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990). The thought is that they will develop deeper knowledge as a result of having to explain it to others. There is no evidence to support this assumption.

D. Professional Growth Among Preservice Teachers

Three studies have focussed on growth among preservice teachers at very early points in their teacher-training programs. Each study looked at changes in personal beliefs or in the ways personal beliefs affected what students learned from university course work.

Calderhead and Robson (1991) followed 12 students through their first year of course work in an elementary teacher education program at a British University. The students were interviewed periodically throughout the year about their anxieties, their image of themselves as teachers, and their understanding of how pupils learn.

Results of this study indicated that each of the 12 students entered the program with clear images of good teaching that were related to their own classroom experiences as pupils. The images were derived from one or two models. The students tended to focus on and describe their own actions as teachers rather than the actions of pupils. They were unable to adapt their image of teachers to different situations and pupil needs.

McDaniel (1991) looked at how 22 preservice teachers made sense of a foundations course in philosophy and history of education. Each student was interviewed six times and asked to relate class sessions to field observations. Findings indicated that preservice teachers related the content of their courses to their own beliefs and prior experiences in classrooms. The content of the course and the field observations did not affect their prior beliefs.

Weinstein (1990) examined changes in student's beliefs about teaching. Thirty-eight prospective elementary teachers completed questionnaires. A subset of 12 students were interviewed periodically throughout the semester. The questionnaires and interviews probed the student's preconceptions about the definition of good teaching, their expectations for student teaching and their perceptions of their own strengths and weaknesses as teachers. Data suggested that the students were optimistic about future teaching. Their perceptions of good teaching centered on

affective traits. The students beliefs about teaching and themselves as teachers remained the same throughout the semester despite course work and field experience.

These three studies point out the central role and stability and inflexibility that preexisting beliefs play in filtering the content of education course work.

E. Some Changes Experienced During Student Teaching

A few studies examined how education students' knowledge of teaching changed during student teaching or over the course of an entire preservice program. Pigge and Marso (1989) examined changes in the concerns of 133 preservice teachers as they progressed through course work and student teaching. Anxiety, concerns and self-confidence were assessed periodically by questionnaire. The students became less concerned about themselves and more aware of classroom variables as they progressed through the program. Their attitudes about teaching, their future effect on pupils, and their outlook to success in teaching remained optimistic and unchanged.

Shapiro (1991) looked at the changes in perceptions of 23 preservice secondary teachers. The student teachers were interviewed before, during and after the first phase of their teacher education program. Shapiro identified conceptual changes on the part of the students who developed an awareness that a) their initial beliefs had been

incorrect b) they had acquired new technical know-how c) they had discovered new ways of categorizing experience and d) they had acquired new self-knowledge.

Aitken and Mildon (1991) tracked the personal knowledge and perceptions of four teacher candidates over the course of their preservice program and into their first 4 months of teaching. They concluded that students' experiences were partially unique but there were also common themes such as a close connection between each student's biography and how he or she experienced the teacher education program. Prior experiences in classrooms appeared to determine what could be learned from course work. Another common theme was a lack of connection between the content of university courses and the demands of classroom teaching. All of the students felt that the courses had focussed too much on theory and too little on practical strategies.

Gore and Zeichner (1991) examined the amount of reflection manifested by 11 student teachers as they completed a program designed to promote reflection. Journals written by the students over two semesters were evaluated according to levels of reflection inspired by Van Manen (1977). Gore and Zeichner found little evidence of reflection. What they found was technical rationality, the lowest level of reflection. They speculated that the program failed to promote reflection because of the traditional nature of the supervision of the student

teaching.

These studies imply that the education students' entry beliefs generally are unchanged by teacher education programs. For professional growth to occur, prior beliefs must be modified and restructured (Kagan, 1992).

F. Teacher Socialization Prior to and During Teacher Education

Zeichner and Gore (1990) define teacher socialization as the process whereby the individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers.

Socialization Prior to Teacher Education

Dan Lortie (1975) argues in his influential work on the sociology of teaching that the students' predispositions exert a much more powerful socializing influence than either preservice training or later socialization in the workplace. According to Lortie, teacher socialization occurs largely through the internalization of teaching models during the time spent as pupils in close contact with teachers. He refers to this as an "apprenticeship of observation". Formal teacher education is viewed as having little ability to alter the cumulative effects of the anticipatory socialization.

A position outlined by Fieman-Nemser (1983) is a psychoanalytic explanation. This explanation of teacher

socialization prior to teacher education suggests that socialization is affected to a considerable extent by the quality of relationships teachers as children had with important adults (e.g., mother, father, teachers). Becoming a teacher is to some extent a process of trying to become like significant others in one's childhood or trying to replicate early childhood relationships.

Ross (1987) argues that the process of modeling former teachers is a highly selective and deliberate process in which student teachers pick and choose the various attributes and practices they observed as pupils and synthesize them into the teacher they would like to be.

Recent work has expanded upon the original explanations of pretraining socialization influences. Many nontraditional students are now entering teacher education programs. Some of these students have had previous teaching or other work experience and/or experience in parenting. Even traditional education students come to teacher education with prior experience in camp counselling, baby-sitting, and teaching Sunday School (Lanier & Little, 1986). Only a few studies have explored the influences of these kinds of experiences on teaching practices (Bullough, 1989; Crow, 1987; Fieman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1986).

Also in recent years a number of studies have employed a variety of biographical, autobiographical and life history methodologies to understand the development of teachers'

knowledge (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). These interpretive and critical studies provide information about the ways that teachers' perspectives are rooted in the variety of personal, familial, religious, political and cultural experiences they bring to teaching (Pinar, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1987; Burgess, 1988; Raymond & Surprenant, 1988; and Casey, 1988).

Socialization During Teacher Education

When examining the socializing role of the professional component of preservice teacher education programs, one needs to distinguish between university based and field-based components

With regard to methods and foundations courses there is much evidence that the knowledge, skills and dispositions provided to students have little influence on their teaching actions, even during the initial practicum training (Grant, 1981; Hodges, 1982; Katz & Raths, 1982). Students come into these courses with very low expectations about what can be learned from professional courses about teaching (Book et al., 1983).

Several explanations are offered in the literature for the apparent low impact of preservice teacher education courses on the socialization of students into teaching. There is the thought that formal teacher education is important because of the strong and enduring effects of the

pretraining influences discussed earlier (Crow, 1988). Related to this argument is the position that the impact of preservice education courses is diffused because of the segmentation in education programs and the mixed messages that result (Atkinson & Delamont, 1985).

Case studies of teacher education students have presented many examples of students interpreting the messages of education courses in ways that reinforce the perspectives and dispositions they bring to the program (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1986).

A challenge to the position that professional education courses have a weak socializing impact on the student comes from those who consider the hidden curriculum of these courses. Ginsburg and Clift (1990) describe how the hidden curriculum sends messages to students about the status of power of teachers as an occupational group; the theory and practice of teaching; the teachers role in making curriculum decisions; and role of the school in regard to inequalities in society. They suggest that the hidden curriculum constitutes the core of teacher socialization.

Generally, studies on the socialization role of field experiences have not attended to the quality or substance of these experiences, which differ from program intentions (Calderhead, 1988). These studies have not identified the particular kinds of field programs and components within programs such as characteristics of placement sites which

are related to different socialization outcomes for different students (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). More studies are needed that attend to the complex set of interactions existing among program features and the characteristics and dispositions that individual students bring to the experience.

G. Stress in the Teacher-Training Experience.

Teachers-in-training experience stress at levels at least equivalent to those seen in regular teachers (Abernathy, Manera, & Wright, 1985). Bradley (1984) suggested that most student teachers experience "excessive stress". Student teachers typically lack not only the range of skills, the confidence and the status of the experienced teacher, but are also often engaged in ruminations about whether they really want to become a teacher at all. Conflict and uncertainty within themselves about their career choice adds to the teaching problems that confront them in the classroom (Sinclair & Nicoll, 1981). Gold (1985) has suggested that student teaching may be especially stressful in that younger teachers in general are more inclined to experience higher amounts of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than are older teachers. Esridge and Coker (1985) also report that the less professional preparation the more stress is usually encountered. Hourcade et al. (1988) suggested that the role

reversal inherent in the student-teaching experience may be discomfiting for many participants. In a short period of time the student teacher undergoes significant changes in his or her role expectations - from a relatively passive existence as a student to the active role as a teacher.

Sources of Stress in Student-Teaching

Abernathy et al. (1985) surveyed student teachers and cooperating teachers to determine which factors were considered most stressful for student teachers. Data revealed that student teachers ranked "classroom discipline" as the greatest stress-producing factor in their student teaching. They ranked "unmotivated students" as the second most stressful factor. "Lecturing" and "time management" were third and fourth highest stress producers. Cooperating teachers' top four stressors were identical to those ranked by the student teachers.

Eskridge and Coker (1985) and Raschke et. al. (1985) also report discipline and classroom management as major sources of stress for student teachers.

Suggestions for Reducing Stress in Student Teaching

Hourcade et. al. (1988) suggested that when making student teaching practicum placements, conscientious efforts should be made by university supervisors to assign stress-

sensitive students to schools where there are similarities in educational philosophies between cooperating teachers and student teachers.

Gold (1985) suggested that frequent conferences and open communication between student teachers, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors can serve to reduce stress significantly.

Sharpe (1973) noted peaks in depression and stress. Twice during the student teaching experience, once early and once about halfway through. With this in mind, Hourcade et. al. (1988) suggest timely intervention could alleviate stress. In addition, relaxation and stress reduction procedures might be taught as part of the preparatory process for student teaching.

Bradley (1984) noted that cooperating teachers can reduce stress for their student teachers by demonstrating specific teaching suggestions, rather than simply telling the student teacher what is right or wrong.

Student teaching is a very subjective experience. The studies on stress in teaching training are all quantitative in approach (Hourcade et al 1988, Abernathy et al, 1985, Kaplan, 1988). The proposed study will focus on the subjective teacher-training experiences of the students.

H. Needs of Student Teachers

The most important need of preservice teachers is successful student teaching experiences (Ryan, 1992). Theoretically based teacher training is no substitute for on-the-job experiences (Olson & Osborne, 1991). There is a need for a practical exposure to the classroom early in the program. Olson and Osborne (1991) suggest that if this need could be addressed successfully, the disorientation between personal idealism and practical realities might be reduced and result in a more successful transition into the teaching profession.

According to Ryan (1992) other teacher-training needs (enhancement of personal hardiness, preprofessional screening, career exploration and assessment of personal stress tolerance) are less important to student teachers. Student teachers' needs reflect a preoccupation with self and survival. Professional competence, security of teaching position, administrative support, training for the job, respect as a person and as a professional were other needs of student teachers (Ryan, 1992).

Summary

In summary there is an abundance of literature on the preparation, development, professional growth, and socialization of student teachers. There are fewer studies on stress during student teaching and needs of student teachers.

Almost all studies prior to 1990 were approached from a quantitative framework. Therefore most studies on teacher development, professional growth and socialization of student teachers are generally quantitative in methodology.

Recently a few researchers approached their studies from a qualitative perspective. Three of these studies looked at the ways student beliefs affected what students learned from coursework (Calderhead & Robson, 1991, McDaniel, 1991, and Weinstein, 1990). Shapiro (1990) and Gore and Zeichner (1991) examined changes in perceptions encountered by student teachers in their first year of their educational programs. Only one study was found that looked at the course of the preservice program (Aitken & Mildon, 1991). This study was published after the data were collected for the current study.

There is a dearth of research that explores the teacher training experience from the students' perspective. The present study represents an effort to understand the "lived" educational experience of the students in order to determine if there is a common process that they experience in their

journey to become teachers. The study attempts to determine the areas the students perceived to be important and areas perceived to be detrimental to their development and socialization as teachers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

A. The Choice of Approach

The decision regarding the selection of a research method is predominantly dependent upon the research question. Questions which focus on cause and effect, prediction or explanations are well suited for the quantitative design. In contrast, questions which emphasize the understanding of a topic from an individual's frame of reference are more appropriate for qualitative methods. Qualitative methods permit the researcher to study the experiences of the participants in depth and detail. A quantitative design requires the varying perspectives and experiences of people to fit into a limited number of response categories (Patton, 1990). Qualitative methods can give the intricate details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative research is particularly appropriate in areas of study where little work has been done or where operative assumptions of previously done research are in question.

Human beings interpret each other's actions instead of merely reacting (Blumer, 1969). Their response is not made to the actions of one another but is based instead on the meaning which they attach to such actions. In order to tap

this "interpretive component" of the teacher-training experience a qualitative design was selected for this study. Qualitative research allows access to a wide range of interactions, meanings, and influential elements of process without being constrained by preconceived notions of cause and effect. A qualitative design was chosen in order to "flesh out" the teacher-training experience by getting the students' perceptions of the experience.

B. The Study Design

The study design was based on a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), since the research question focused on process, an understanding of similarity across cases, the active role of individuals, and the interrelationships between action, conditions and meaning (Blumer, 1969).

An advantage of using grounded theory is its emphasis on discovering processes. Grounded theory is a research methodology that attempts to delineate basic psychological processes (Chenitz & Swanswan, 1986). These processes involve an interaction between psychological factors within the individual and the individual's social environment. Basic psychosocial processes are conceptually developed to account for the organization of social behavior as it occurs over time (Bigus & Glasser, 1979). A basic psychosocial process is a rich dynamic description of an active process

which explains the variations that occur in the actions, interactions, and perceptions found within the collected data.

The grounded theory approach uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon, which is grounded in the data and actual experiences of the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Rather than being predetermined prior to data collection, hypotheses and concepts eminate from the data collected. Therefore, they are grounded in the data.

Both inductive and deductive methods of data collection, analysis and hypothesis generation are utilized in the grounded theory approach. Throughout the research process, emerging concepts and hypotheses are examined in light of new data to guarantee they are valid conceptualizations of the phenomena under study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

C. Data Collection

Data were collected through formal in-depth semi-structured interviews with the participants. The interviews were conducted in the Education clinic at the University of Alberta. All sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed.

At the beginning of the interview session, the study was explained and written consent was obtained. Demographic information such as age, marital status and area of

specialization was noted.

Participants participated in one interview that lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. An interview guide (see Appendix A) was used as a conceptual framework. The number and sequence of questions varied from one participant to another. As the interviews progressed, the questions became more focussed.

To ensure adequate data collection within the interview, the investigator incorporated basic elements of a "good interview" within each session. Adequate measures were taken to ensure privacy. The investigator attempted to develop support and build a trusting, nonjudgmental relationship with each participant to encourage freedom of expression. Open-ended, reflective, paraphrasing and clarifying questions were used to gain a greater insight into the participants' experience and perspective. The investigator's training in counselling was an asset.

Additional sources of data were the investigator's field notes and memos. Field notes were written within 24 hours of each interview session by the investigator. They consisted of the content of the interview, nonverbal behaviour of the participant, and the investigator's impressions and analytic process.

The investigator's memos were maintained throughout the study. Memos consisted of the investigator's impressions, ideas and hypotheses about the phenomenon and the research

process. The technique of memoing enhances the theoretical sensitivity and heightens self-awareness regarding personal biases (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

D. The Sample

Choosing Participants

The sample was composed of 14 University of Alberta Education students who had completed their phase III practicum requirement in April 1992. The students were contacted through faculty practicum supervisors and at the suggestion of the Faculty Practicum Coordinator. I attended the practicum classes of the secondary education students during the call-back to the university at the mid-term point of their phase III practicum. I also attended one of the weekly meetings for a group of elementary practicum students. I explained my study to the students and requested volunteers to participate in a one hour interview. Thirty-nine students volunteered to be interviewed.

The fourteen participants were purposefully selected to represent such characteristics as gender, area of teaching specialization, age, and marital status. Purposive sampling maximizes the opportunities to elicit data regarding variations along dimensions of categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). There was a random quality to the sampling procedures in that the first person contacted by phone in a

specific area of teaching specialization became a participant.

The sample consisted of 6 males and 8 females. The age range of the sample was 22 years to 34 years. Two male students and two female students were over 30. Two of the male participants and two of the female participants were specializing in elementary education. The remaining ten participants were in secondary education programs with majors in social studies, science, physical education and English. Two of the participants in the elementary program and two in the secondary education program listed special education as their minor. Four of the participants were married and two had children.

Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling involves sampling or gathering incidents and aspects of the phenomenon on the basis of concepts that are emerging from the data. Analysis of the first four interviews (a pilot study) enabled the future sampling or gathering of incidents and aspects of the phenomenon on the basis of concepts emerging from the data of the first four interviews.

Theoretical sampling may include open, relational, variational and discriminative sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Open sampling was accomplished purposefully rather than systematically. Relational, variational and

discriminative sampling were also done purposefully, as individuals were chosen who would maximize opportunities to elicit data related to potential variations in the dimensions of categories.

Theoretical sampling was accomplished by selecting later participants who were different from earlier participants in some way. This allowed observation and analysis of whether patterns were consistent across cases, despite differences in age, gender, marital status, and area of teaching specialization.

E. Data Analysis

Data consisted of the written transcripts, field notes and memos. Four interviews that composed a pilot study were included in the analysis. Techniques to enhance theoretical sensitivity were employed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theoretical sensitivity is the ability to recognize what is important in data and to give it meaning. It represents the ability to use the technical literature as well as personal and professional experience in an imaginative manner. Theoretical sensitivity is also acquired during the research process through continual interactions with the data. It is important to keep a balance between what is created by the researcher and what is real. The researcher continually asked, "what is really going on here?" and "Does what I see fit the reality of the

data?" These questioning techniques allowed the researcher to broaden the thinking about the data and view it more critically and with more depth. The researcher also maintained an attitude of skepticism about categories and theories arising early in the research.

Memoing was also utilized. This involved recording all ideas and hypotheses about the phenomenon as they occured to the researcher. Memos recorded the insights, understandings, and emerging patterns. This contributed to the density of the emerging model.

After each interview, field notes were recorded and memoing began. Transcripts were checked for accuracy. Memoing was used at all stages of data analysis; before and while coding, while sorting codes and determining categories. The memos were grounded in the data and were eventually tied to specific quotes of the participants.

The investigator was the primary coder for all of the data. Another graduate student independently coded the first two interviews and discussions were held about differences in the coding. Discussions were also held with the investigator's supervisor to review the initial coding.

The process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data is termed open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The transcripts were coded on a sentence-by-sentence basis without any preset codes. Any sentences which were meaningful were highlighted and

designated as meaning units. For the first three transcripts each meaning unit was paraphrased and assigned a code. The remaining transcripts were coded on a line-by-line basis. This resulted in a proliferation of codes which became difficult to manage.

A second level of coding (Axial Coding) was applied to group concepts that seem to pertain to the same phenomena. Open coding fractures the data and allows one to identify some categories. Axial coding puts those data back together in new ways by making connections between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1991).

At the axial coding level each transcript was color coded and individual open codes were grouped into more encompassing categories. The coded meaning units were cut from the color coded transcripts and placed into envelopes labelled with the secondary axial codes. The color stripe through the cuttings allowed the researcher to determine how many of the participants contributed to that particular category. If most of the cuttings were from one or two individuals, the category was collapsed into another axial code. Thus data analysis proceeded by a general process of line-by-line coding, constantly comparing phrases and categories to see if they were different, or if they could be collapsed into the same category.

The third level of coding was selective coding. According to Corbin & Strauss (1990) selective coding is the

process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development. The final integration was not much different than axial coding. In this study the axial codes were arranged in a chronological order. Each axial category related to the core category which was the student-teaching practicum. The student-teaching practicum evolved as the focus of the study.

At this stage of analysis a model of the temporal ordering of the participants experience was developed. A basic psychological process had not emerged from the data. I kept asking myself: "What is the bottom line here? What is going on here? What process underlies or ties together the chronological progression of teacher training. At each stage (the prepracticum, the practicum, and postpracticum) the student experiences dissonance about personal effectiveness as a teacher, or about society's view of teachers. This image-of-self as teacher had to be reformulated throughout the teacher-training experience. What evolved was a three phase process whereby the student experienced dissonance, reacted to the dissonance and reformulated the image-of-self as teacher.

F. Auditability, Credibility and Fittingness

A number of methods can be used to establish that the data and the analysis are reliable and valid. This is called "Establishing Trustworthiness" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Patton, 1990). From the qualitative perspective reliability and validity are addressed using the concepts of auditability, credibility and fittingness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

1) Auditability

Auditability is similar to the concept of reliability in quantitative research. Auditability is related to the consistency of qualitative findings. If a study is auditable, then a second researcher should be able to follow the primary investigator's research path and arrive at similar conclusions or at least agree with the interpretation of the data. The project work plan outlines the steps taken by the researcher (see Appendix D).

Auditability was primarily achieved through the comprehensiveness of the final research report. This includes the description and explanation of the research question; selection of the sample; collection and analysis of the data.

A secondary coder was used to review the investigator's coding procedure for consistency and accuracy. Discrepancies in coding were discussed.

2) Credibility

Credibility is similar to the concept of internal validity found in quantitative research. It implies valid and accurate recording and depiction of the experiences under investigation.

The following approaches were used to enhance credibility. 1) An interview guide was reviewed by the supervisor 2) A pilot sample was interviewed to assess content validity 3) Effective interview techniques such as empathic listening, appropriate non-verbal behavior and clarifying questions were utilized 4) Interviews were transcribed verbatim 5) The transcripts were compared to the audio-recordings by the researcher.

3) Fittingness

Fittingness is similar to the quantitative concept of external validity and indicates the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. Fittingness may be increased by the use of triangulation. Triangulation is achieved by combining information from varied data sources, investigators, theoretical perspectives or methods.

For the purposes of this study the concept of fittingness was achieved through theoretical and investigator triangulation. Theoretical triangulation was achieved through the integration of the literature with the

final results. Investigator triangulation was achieved by: 1) The investigator's supervisor reviewed some of the coding done by the investigator 2) A secondary coder independently reviewed two transcripts for general impressions and themes 3) Findings were reviewed by teachers who are acquaintances of the investigator to see how the results compared to their experiences of teacher-training.

G. Bracketing

In qualitative research, the research instrument is the researcher. An awareness is needed of the influence of personal experience, beliefs, values and biases on the research process. Bracketing or analysis of the researcher's personal preconceptions and experiences in relation to the research topic prior to and during data collection and analysis is necessary.

Sometimes it is best to select problems in a subject area or context with which the investigator has not had extensive previous experience (Locke et. al, 1987). As my background is in psychology, not education, I believe I was neutral relative to the subject of the study.

I found that the students I interviewed were more open to talking candidly when they learned that I was not in Education. My ignorance of their program allowed them to be the authority in the area, and they did not feel threatened that their interpretation of the experience would be doubted

or questioned by me.

Although I have no training in Education, I have had a history as a student in the education system. I was generally bored with school as a child, and as a result talked too much. This led to many detentions I thought were unfair at the time. Generally, I did not have a high regard for teachers and I felt this could potentially interfere with the analysis.

As an undergraduate at the University of Alberta I knew several people who switched to Education because it was perceived to be an easier faculty in which to succeed. This was another personal bias which I felt could potentially narrow my view and color the results.

I found, however, through talking with the Education students about their experiences, I gained a new respect for them and for the career of teaching. The students were being confronted with many negative societal views of teaching. They were also aware that Education was considered an easy faculty within the university environment. The practicum component of their program forces the students to move from the theoretical to the practical. Though this is not an easy task, the students I talked with had a high level of perseverance and a strong motivation to do their best regardless of the situation.

My formal training in counselling psychology was an asset in conducting interviews and encouraging the

participants to express themselves fully. My Master's program in counselling also had a practicum component in which the move from the theoretical to the practical was necessary. There appear to be many similarities in adjustment to applying theory to practice between teacher-training and counsellor-training. The experience of dissonance and self doubt about ability is present in both experiences.

H. Considerations and Delimitations

There are a number of issues to be considered in this study. This is an initial exploratory study into the perceptions of education students of their teacher-training experience. Enough data were gathered to suggest a framework of a basic psychosocial process which students experience in their development as teachers. In this study however, the students interviewed were all trained at the same institution - The University of Alberta. Therefore the results may contain some idiosyncrasies reflective of that particular University. Further research is needed to further delineate the psychosocial process that emerged.

Participants in this study all volunteered to participate. Care was taken to include individuals whose experience was positive as well as individuals whose experience was negative. However, because the sample was chosen from only the volunteer population, the results may

not be representative of the general population of education students. Only 39 students volunteered out of a total of 418 students who were registered in the phase III practicum course for term II of the 1991-1992 academic year. The participants who were interviewed tended to have either very positive or very negative experiences. Those with neutral views of the experience may not have volunteered to be interviewed. In this study we cannot differentiate between students whose practicums were eight weeks long and those whose practicums were twelve weeks.

The disadvantage of choosing students who have fulfilled their practicum requirement in the same term invites the possibility of term related data infiltrating the results. The advantage is that these students will recall their experiences quite vividly. They have not yet begun their teaching careers, but have finished their teacher-training. Interviewing them at this point in time inhibited interference of hindsight reflection on the process which could result after they have begun teaching as a career. However, the influence of the timing of the interviews cannot be determined in this study.

Core processes and phases of the educational experience from the perspective of the students are likely similar for education students generally. However variations in details related to context, contingencies and intervening conditions may vary for different groups. The goal of this study was

not to specify the variations for the general population of education students but to delineate a set of general conditions under which the basic psychosocial process occurs. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) state, the specifying of conditions, not generalization per se, is the goal of grounded theory.

I. Ethical Considerations

The principal ethical considerations for this study included informed consent, voluntary participation and confidentiality. A proposal for this study which highlighted these ethical considerations was submitted to and approved by the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Educational Psychology.

The participants were informed of the general purpose of the study and their role in the study. They were required to sign a written consent form (see Appendix B) prior to the interview. Participants were informed that the interviews would be audio-recorded and transcribed. They were told that their participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. They were also told that they had the right to refuse to answer any question and that they could request that the tape recorder be turned off and the interview terminated at any time. Participants were told that they would be sent a summary of the results at the completion of the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. Pseudonyms and code numbers were used on all transcripts. Information which could identify the participants was omitted from the final report. Names mentioned during the interviews were omitted from the transcripts. The transcribers and secondary coder were required to sign an oath of confidentiality (see Appendix C). All audio-recordings and data were kept in a safe place. Audio tapes were erased at the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter begins with an overview of the psychosocial process that emerged from the data. This is followed by an indepth description of each phase of the process and supporting quotes from the participants.

Overview of the Process

The basic psychosocial process which emerged was "Realizing the Reality of Teaching". There are three phases to the process: Experiencing Dissonance; Reacting to the Dissonance; Reformulating the image of teaching and "self" as teacher.

The teacher-training experience consists of three stages: the prepracticum stage; the practicum stage; and the postpracticum stage. The "Realizing the Reality" process reoccurs throughout the three stages in the training period but is most evident during the practicum experience. Thus, the process is not linear but is an ongoing reformulation of the teaching image.

Analysis of the data showed that student-teachers have preconceptions or beliefs that they bring to their study of teaching. They have an image of teaching and and image of "self" as teacher. Throughout the preservice stage of teacher development, the students experienced anxiety,

expressed through varying degrees of cognitive emotional discomfort or dissonance as their images of teaching are challenged.

Student teachers moved through a psychosocial process where they experienced dissonance, reacted to the dissonance, and reformulated their image of teaching and "self" as teacher. Figures one, two, and three outline the three phases of the "Realizing the Reality of Teaching" process.

A word about terminology: I restrict the use of the term student to the preservice teachers enrolled in the practicum course. I use the term pupil to refer to elementary or secondary students.

Figure 1

Phase I of the "Realizing the Reality of Teaching" Process

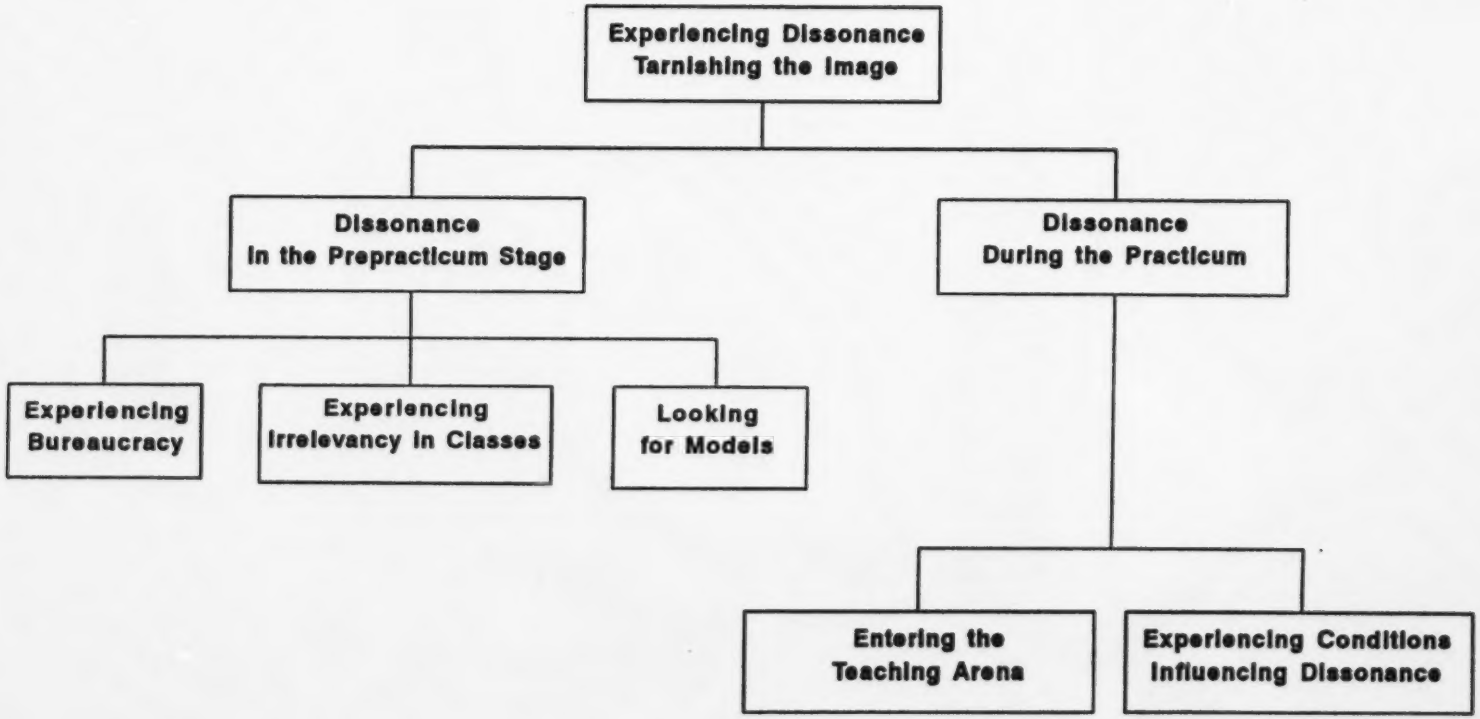


Figure 2

Phase II of the "Realizing the Reality of Teaching" Process

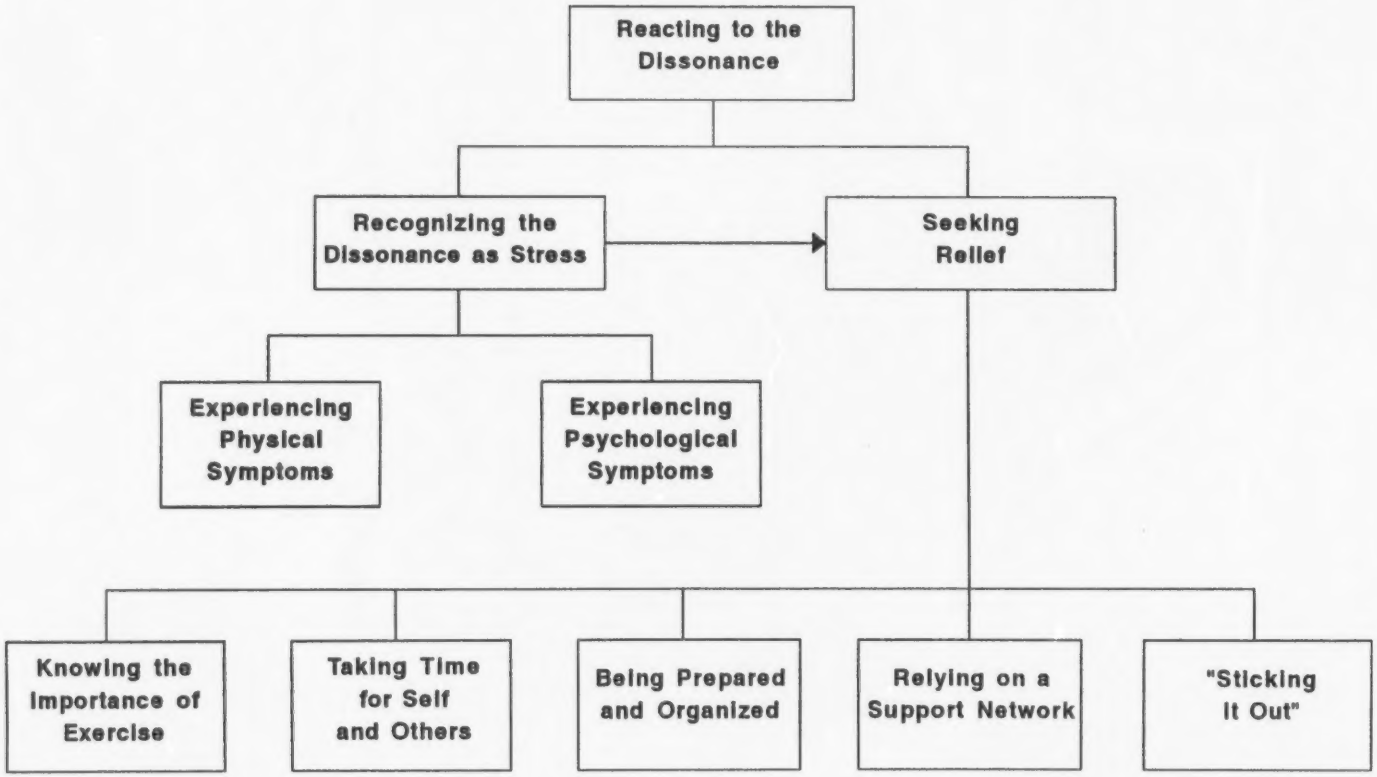
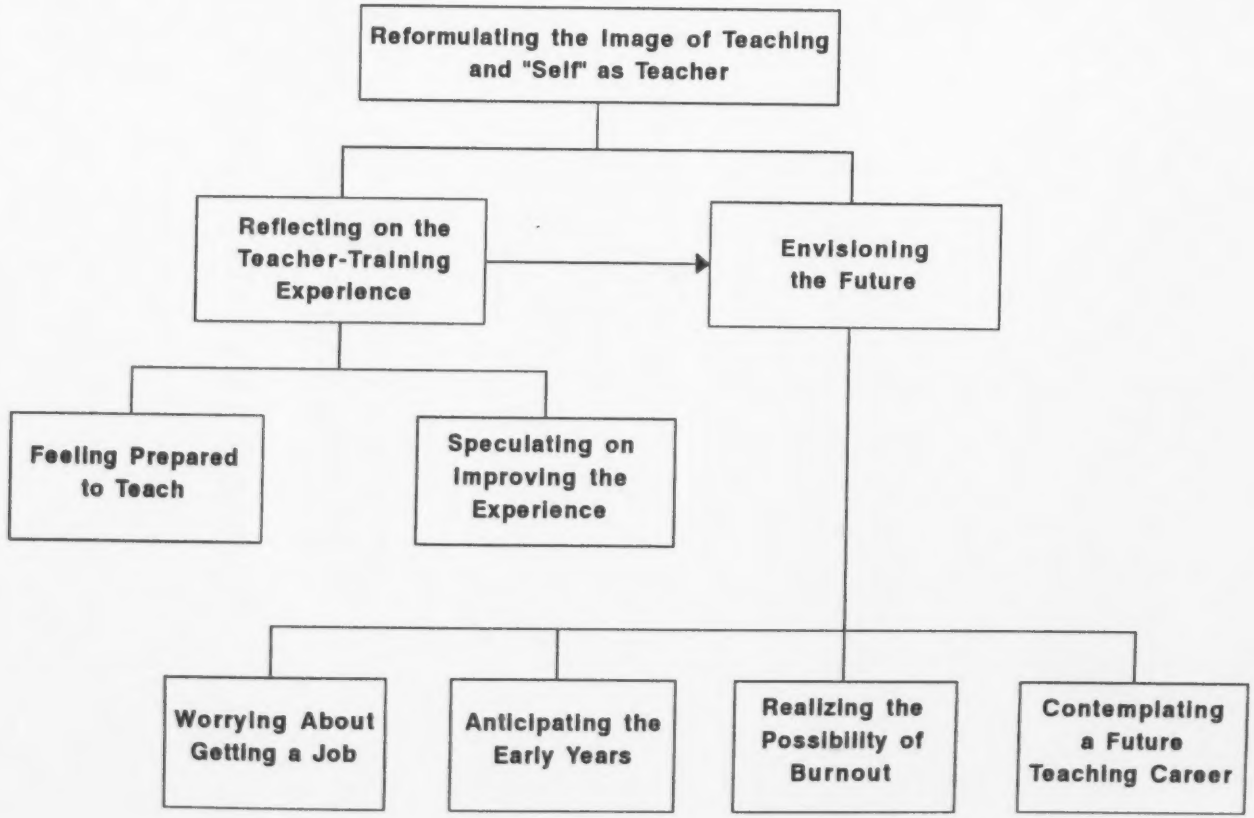

Reacting to the Dissonance
Recognizing the Dissonance as Stress
Seeking Relief
Experiencing Physical Symptoms
Experiencing Psychological Symptoms
Knowing the Importance of Exercise
Taking Time for Self and Others
Being Prepared and Organized
Relying on a Support Network
"Sticking It Out"

Figure 3

Phase III of the "Realizing the Reality of Teaching" Process


Reformulating the Image of Teaching and "Self" as Teacher
Reflecting on the Teacher-Training Experience
Envisioning the Future
Feeling Prepared to Teach
Speculating on Improving the Experience
Worrying About Getting a Job
Anticipating the Early Years
Realizing the Possibility of Burnout
Contemplating a Future Teaching Career

An Indepth Description of the "Realizing the Reality of Teaching" Process

The Pre-Teacher Training Image

Students enter teacher training with an image of teachers and teaching formed during the years as pupils in a classroom. Deciding to become a teacher is often made early in life. Many of the students said they always wanted to be a teacher. The decision is based on their own positive school experiences, positive teacher role models, and family members who are teachers.

> I had so many teachers that I liked, I liked the idea of the profession. My whole school experience was very positive. D.

> It (teaching) was something I wanted to do since elementary school. I've looked up to teachers my whole life. I've had a few real strong role models that were teachers. Teaching runs in my family. My dad was a social studies teacher, my brother is a phys ed teacher and a couple of aunts are teachers so it's real comfortable. V.

> All my experiences being a student were always very positive. I always had a very positive view of school. I was very fortunate that I had wonderful teachers especially in high school. I always did well (in school) so I got all the perks. We had a very unstable home, the stability was at school. B.

> I was recommended to be a teacher going all the way back to junior high. I also had one particular teacher in junior high who provided me with a role model for teaching. My mother was a teacher. E.

Even students who had originally wanted another career stated that they wanted a teaching career early in life.

> It (teaching) was a decision from my childhood. In grade one I had a very influential teacher. First I tried to be a police officer but my eyes weren't quite up to par and then I went into teaching. N.

> I came to university I got caught up in the peer pressure and went into business because that was the thing to do. I was trying to please everyone else, but what I really wanted to do was be a teacher from the time I remember. P.

> I've always been interested in teaching. I had goals to teach at the university level, but that didn't work out. V.

> When I started university, I wanted to be a marine biologist but I realized there's no job. Education was always in my mind, so I switched over to the combined degree. G.

Some students had previous experience working with children or young adults and found enjoyment in that experience.

> I just love working with kids of all ages. R.

> I've coached and instructed all the way down to elementary age and I really enjoyed my time doing so. V.

> I like kids, I really love working with children. I always liked school, and I wanted to pass that along to other kids. M.

> I had experience as a special needs aid at a high school and I really enjoyed the experience.

The reasons for choosing teaching as a career reflect the students' positive image of the profession. The image is based on their own positive school experience. The image is formed when they are pupils. It reflects an idealistic view of teaching. The students are each pursuing their dream to become a teacher. They have an expectation of how teaching will be. The reality however is that not all dreams can be lived out as planned. Dreams are interrupted or tarnished and expectations are tested.

One student expressed the dissonance connected with having to justify choosing teaching as a profession.

> I gave up a job, a full-time career, to teach. I gave up security to go into a field that I've not heard great things about. I've heard about all the stresses related to teaching, high burnout. I've heard, "you'll never get a job", "there's no jobs out there", "teaching a second language is the hardest thing to teach". Family and friends were saying, "why did you leave your job?" It was stressful having to justify teaching as a profession for me. Ma.

The pre-training image or dream of teaching is challenged very early in the teacher-training program.

A. Phase I of "The Realizing the Reality of Teaching Process": Experiencing Dissonance - Tarnishing the Image

Dissonance during teacher training varies in degree due to the personal and professional context and conditions in which the experience is taking place. In the prepracticum

stage context and conditions include: experiencing bureaucracy, experiencing irrelevancy in classes, and looking for models. During the practicum experience dissonance varies as a result of many factors. Personal factors include approach toward the practicum, knowing enough, feeling confident, communicating and assessing responsibility. Structural factors include: the practicum placement decision, the cooperating teacher, access to resources, workload required, societal problems in the classroom, and evaluation of the practicum.

1. Dissonance in the Pre-Practicum Stage of Teacher Training

a) Experiencing Bureaucracy

Early in the teacher training experience, students experienced dissonance when confronted with the red tape and protocol of a large bureaucracy. Students new to the university and those with a previous degree from the University of Alberta reported feeling that they were treated with a lack of respect by staff in undergraduate services. The students experienced a lack of status in being an education student that they did not perceive in other faculties. They experienced dissonance because they had difficulty obtaining the information and guidance required to make course selection decisions. They perceived the Faculty to be responsible for providing program

planning. Numerous students reported the need for clear channels and more direct guidance.

> In my first degree we were given a consultant and it was very very helpful. Coming back, even though I've had a university experience, looking at that calendar and trying to figure out the classes that I needed was overwhelming. Getting the information from the eighth floor is very frustrating. K.

> I switched to the combined Science/Education program. I asked if there were any counsellors around and was told "not really". Its a new program and nobody seemed to be able to tell me what I needed. You need a place to ask "what do I need, what do you recommend I take." I had a lot of problems with my time table. I found the science office to be very organized but eighth floor in education was not organized. G.

> There was no advisor assigned so it was a bit confusing at first. My brother had gone through the program so he was my advisor. V.

> No one really tells you how to piece together your courses for your own benefit. I had some courses I didn't need but took because they seemed interesting. N.

For some the absence of direct guidance was a source of frustration.

> There's been so many times when I'm trying to plan my schedule I have a problem with something and don't know quite what to do. I'm in my fourth year and I still don't know who the heck I would go and talk to. R.

> I just feel sort of lost. When I hear later about great courses, I get mad that nobody told us about it. M.

> Every time I have dealt with administration in the Education building I just want to strangle them and throw them away. I registered by phone from Ottawa and it cost me ninety-five dollars in phone calls to get my questions answered. D.

Students perceived the staff on the eight floor (student records) as not being service oriented. The students reported feeling powerless and insignificant. In fact the students suggest the eighth floor staff have a reputation among students as being unhelpful.

> I'd come back to university after being out for five years so I had never had to deal with the eighth floor before. My first month at school I was in tears most of the time trying to deal with that (the eighth floor). They're very, very inflexible and they are very abrupt. Often I don't know exactly what I'm looking for and they're not willing to take the time to answer the questions. K.

> I've been lucky. I haven't had to go there (eighth floor) very often, but I find it generally very unhelpful, like they don't do anything. If you get a smile its incredible. You stand in line waiting and then they make you feel like an idiot for even coming up there. Whenever I have to go up there it's like something I dread. In the business building it's excellent. You walk in there, they're friendly, they'll get the information for you immediately. I think something should be done about the eighth floor. They really have a bad reputation. M.

> Then there's the dreaded eighth floor in this university. Usually when you're up there you have a sense of dread because they are notorious for red tape. My biggest problem has been dealing with administration. They are not friendly there or very supportive. I found that if I dress to the nines or carry a briefcase they give you good service. Since I'm older they don't know if I'm a

professor or from Alberta Education and what are they going to do after they treat you nicely. B.

Dealing with the eighth floor was the biggest bitch. I hated going up there. They're so unbelievably rude. I found myself walking on glass, just not to tick them off so that I would get decent service. R.

After you've been in the workforce for a year, I find that coming back (to university) a lot of the administration and the faculty treat us students like children. Not the administration in like the dean, but the receptionist or faculty advisors. I already have a four-year degree from here, and for the first time ever I felt angry at the system because of how they were treating people. There was a big difference going from the Faculty of Phys Ed to the Faculty of Education. Some people up in Student Records are not very nice. They could improve their attitude up there and be a little bit kinder. Ma.

People on the eighth floor treat students like they are beneath them. One woman told me that I could take basket weaving for all she cares. She was so snotty. She had a real attitude. They are not cooperative. D.

They (eighth floor staff) sit behind their desk, they fill out their form and hand it to you and that's it. You want to sit down and have things explained. Actually I was surprised one day when one woman actually sat down and went over the information I needed. I was ready to give up. G.

Strikingly absent were any empathic statements. None of the students reported a positive experience with student records.

The students' experience of feeling a lack of status as an education student clashed with their own positive view of

the teaching profession with which they entered their training. This was a source of dissonance in which their own view of "teaching" was being challenged.

One student spoke directly about her reformulated view of teaching.

> I found out that Education people have to really fight for what they're teaching. The very fact that we're in Education, which is supposedly the easiest faculty - not too smart. You really have to fight to maintain a good image of yourself as a teacher. The inside groups are better because they understand how hard it is to be a teacher. But there is infighting like phys ed teachers are not as good as chemistry teachers. There is a hierarchy of what is better to teach and phys ed is at the bottom. I'm just feeling low about teaching at the time, that's the big problem. Ma.

b) Experiencing Irrelevancy in Classes

The students preferred classes that were practice oriented and that provided information they could use in their practicum situation. The students differed somewhat on what courses were relevant. The needs and past experience of the students played a role in their opinion of the relevancy of certain courses. The students experienced dissonance when classes required memorizing the book. Classes were generally thought to be too theory oriented with insufficient emphasis on practical application.

> The better courses are the Ed Sec courses. Those were better - more practical. They apply more when you are out in the practicum. All these Ed Psych courses, I'm not going to learn anything

from them - its pretty well just memorize the book and write the multiple choice exam... You can't really learn all that much from books. Its really life experience. You need the different techniques and ideas of things you can do, but the textbooks never tell you how to deal with yourself. D.

Many of my academic classes in university didn't seem to be very relevant to what I faced in student teaching. We just brushed over a lot of really important areas in class like behavior management. It seemed like we got a lot of theory and not much practical information at the university. Then you're thrown out in the practicum and suddenly it's all practical. My best course in my whole university experience was Ed S. 348. It was very practical, a lot of practical information. K.

You touch upon classroom management in university classes but you don't get the practical. When you're in your classroom you can't think well in this text it was described this way. When you're teaching you need the practical aspect. N.

Students found course content to be repetitive in many instances.

The Ed Psych course had 200 people or so in the class, multiple choice exams, and was basically memorize the textbook. The material was relevant but there was a lot of repetitiveness of material in other classes. B.

At the university you spend so much time learning what would take so little time in the practicum. In the Ed Psych courses you learn the terminology but you don't get any hands on experience. I had 4 or 5 Ed Psych courses and a lot of it is repetitive. D.

All the courses that I've been taking have been good in terms of what they're trying to talk about but somehow they've got to be able to be lumped

> together to make them more applicable...they are really very repetitive. M.

> I think the Ed Psych courses are too general. They try to push too much at you in ten weeks. The people who did well had taken prior psych courses and already knew some of the material. V.

Students expressed the dissonance they felt regarding their classes. They were confronted with the reality that their classes would not completely prepare them to be teachers.

> The Ed Sec courses were generally pretty good. When I just started I thought I would learn more skills and when I walked out I would be a teacher. I'd thought I'd have a lot more solid base...I think a class on classroom management would really help with stress. M.

> The theory doesn't transfer to the real situation very well. The classes didn't prepare you for the practicum. S.

> I thought the classes would be really useful because why would they offer them if they weren't useful. But I found when I got out there and did my teaching those courses were totally useless. P.

c) Looking for Models

The students looked to their professors as models of teachers. However, they perceived that many of their professors had an unrealistic view of the "real" classroom

environment. They felt that some of the information they received in their classes did not fit with the reality of teaching today. Again, the students perceived the emphasis to be on theory rather than the practical application of theory. They were searching for relevancy and were reality testing the theories they were exposed to in their classes. Students experienced dissonance when they perceived that the "education" they were receiving may not be relevant to the requirements of a "real" classroom.

> The professors who had been out teaching in the last couple of years have a realistic view of what's going on in the classroom. The real professors who have lectured here for 20 years, I don't think they'd survive in a classroom. R.

> I heard a lot of people say that what they were doing in classes didn't relate to the reality of teaching. I found that I was very lucky in that the instructors I had were fairly up to date. However some faculty consultants who came out to visit other student teachers at the same school, it was obvious they hadn't been in a classroom for years and years. V.

> The Ed Sec courses tell you how to teach the material but they don't tell you how to teach to kids. Its almost like they (the professors) forgot what its like to be a teacher, or they don't know what's going on in the schools right now. We need to know how to deal with real problems, not just the theoretical problems but the practical problems. Its a very scratch the surface approach to discipline, procedures, protocol. It's not digging in deeply and finding out what's really happening out there (in the schools). M.

> I think most of the people who taught my courses were so far removed from reality. They've been

> away from the system for so long that they don't have a clue what's going on. P.

2. Dissonance During the Practicum

The students felt that the practicum was the most important aspect of their teacher-training experience.

> Without the practicum all that I learned in university wouldn't mean anything. It's very different applying than just learning the theory. I would not be able to be a teacher without the practicum part. I learned more in the practicum than I've ever learned in a university class. P.

> The practical experience is very, very important. It helps you to weed through all that you have learned and decide what is important and what isn't. R.

> You go into the practicum thinking that student teaching is doing lesson plans etc. But you realize that bonding with the kids is really the most important thing. You're dead in the water if you don't have the kids support. N.

> Student teaching - phase III makes or breaks everybody as a teacher. E.

Although the students perceived the practicum to be crucial to their development as teachers, they also found that the "reality" of teaching sometimes differed from their preconceived image of teaching which caused dissonance. Their teaching experience was not consistent with their dream of what teaching would be like.

Students used various metaphors to describe the dissonance producing and ambiguous nature of the practicum.

> The first thing I can think of is that it's like a waterfall. It's so powerful and it can look so beautiful from afar but once you get into it or under it you can be swept away and really hurt by it - really hurt by it... But then phase 3. I just step back and say that was really beautiful. Just see how it all blends. This mad torrent all comes together at the bottom into a stream that goes away. It's all very uniform. Ma.

> ... it's like skiing. It's a great fun time. I love skiing... but it can be dangerous and you have to be careful... you can fall every once in awhile... you're hurting and you can go sit in the chalet and let the day go by or you can get up and start skiing again. Just be careful and don't go beyond your limits but push a little bit. R.

> Parts of it (the practicum) were nice, parts of it weren't nice enough... It doesn't matter how negative or how positive - it's going to be a new day... the sun will rise the next morning. No matter what happened the day before... you know at least the sun will be up the next morning. Pi.

> It (the practicum) is just like a roller coaster. The highs when things go your way... and the kids are really interested in doing what you want to do... and the next day you can really bomb out and everything you try goes wrong. You just feel like crawling under a rock. K.

a) Entering the Teaching Arena

Students entered the practicum phase of teacher training with preconceived ideas of what the experience would be. In many cases the practicum experience was different from what was expected and this caused dissonance. The students tended to judge their experience based on prepracticum expectations.

7In the special Ed phase I thought I'd be with special needs children. However, the teacher I was with defined special needs as the disruptive children in the regular classroom. I'd thought I would get a lot more experience with extremely special needs children like the dependent handicapped. D.

I thought the practicum would be harder than it was. I learned a lot but its the kind of learning you don't realize until you are done. The problem with the observation practicum is you have rose-colored glasses on. You don't realize how hard teaching is. S.

I didn't expect the kids to act up like they did. I've worked tutoring kids, but I was surprised how ignorant the kids were in class. I don't remember kids acting up like that when I was in school. D.

Initially I thought the placement would be great because it was the school I went to and I remembered it to be a great school. My first couple of weeks I thought to myself this school is really taking a nosedive. I was putting too much on the expectation that the kids would love me because I had been to this school. V.

1) Choosing a Practicum Placement

Students generally requested practicum placements based on the convenience of the location rather than from the point of view of the quality of the learning experience.

When I first decided where I would like to go, the first thing I thought was well I don't want to drive. I wanted a convenient location. Now I realize that you have to make an effort to go to the school that will benefit you the most. Field services placed people according to location. P.

> My minister suggested a Lutheran school in Stony Plain about 10 minutes away. That's where I spent my phase three practicum. B.

> I requested a southside school because I was coaching at the university and had to be there by 5 o'clock each evening. I ended up at a school I went to. It's very close to my home and to the university. V.

> I requested a school in Sherwood Park because I live there. That didn't work out, but the school I ended up at worked out perfectly. G.

2) Being at the Mercy of Luck

Most students did not request a particular placement. The students viewed positive practicum experiences as being due to luck or fortune rather than as an indication of personal success. Students who had positive practicum experiences credited "luck" in getting a good placement as being a critical variable.

> I was very lucky in both of my practicums. Both were very good schools that I was fairly familiar with. I was fortunate to have had 2 good experiences. V.

> I was lucky. I got two great teachers. Luck plays a big role in the school you're going to and the cooperating teacher you get assigned to. R.

> My placement was a blessing because the school and teacher were great. Whereas I know some people in my class who weren't as fortunate as I was with the cooperating teacher. P.

> I lucked out exceptionally with the cooperating teacher. You could luck out and get a really bad cooperating teacher or one you just can't get along with. E.

3) Finding an Approach to the Practicum Experience

Some student-teachers viewed the practicum as a learning experience. Students with this view tended to experience less dissonance during the practicum. These students were more able to incorporate new learning into their "image" of teaching.

> My student teaching experiences were very interesting. I learned far more in the classroom than being a student at university. It was a good learning experience working with the curriculum and seeing what you like and don't like about it. D.

> I learned a lot because I made an awful lot of mistakes. You learn through those mistakes. I think the practicum is invaluable. My attitude was to learn as much as I can. R.

> If you could have videotaped my first lesson and now you would see a dramatic difference because you have to learn to modify and change your techniques to get the best results from your kids. P.

> Part of the problem was that I didn't view the practicum as a learning situation. I'm a bit of a perfectionist and have to do it right the first time. I wanted to be as good as the teacher was or even better. I was stressed about making mistakes. S.

The students who viewed the practicum as a test

experienced more dissonance. The evaluation of the practicum was the focus for these students. These students did not see teaching skills as an ongoing developing experience. As pupils in the classroom these students were likely used to being rewarded for following directions and performing a certain way. As teachers in the classroom they are expected to be leaders. With their emphasis on performance and evaluation, they feared failing at a task with which they had no experience.

> Student teaching is like the eight week long interview that you have with that school. Nobody ever said take a break for yourself. I learned that it doesn't have to be all stress, that you can relax and have fun. I learned this from my students. One told me, "you're going to burn-out - you've got to have fun while you're doing this" so I loosened up with them quite a bit. Ma.

> Last week I was totally worried. I figured I had made him (cooperating teacher) angry the second week so I was being very nice to him because he can still give me a bad evaluation. He kept saying, 'I think you're going to be able to teach'. It was like one day you'll be a good teacher. Right now you're not. Me.

> Its a fail/pass situation. There's no middle ground. A lot of people don't survive and don't get their degree. From the point of view of getting a job, the evaluation is totally everything. E.

> You do things while being observed that you probably normally wouldn't do because it's gonna give you some brownie points. You're not in a position to cause waves or something. You are gong to do what is going to get you the best evaluation. R.

b. Experiencing Conditions Influencing Dissonance

The students perceived several factors as contributing to their dissonance in the practicum. Personal factors such as knowing enough, feeling confident, entering a new role, perceiving a lack of control, doubting abilities to manage the classroom, and assessing personal responsibility. Situational factors cited by the students included the influence of the cooperating teachers, the atmosphere of the school, the workload required, societal problems in the classroom, and awareness of being evaluated.

One student illustrates the factors influencing the practicum experience by the following metaphor.

> The practicum is like a sea. In some situations, depending on the circumstances it can be a rocky, rocky boat ride. In some ways you can have crystal clear waters. It all depends on other elements that actually influence it. You have so many factors when you're teaching that really effect the outcome of your practicum. N.

1) Knowing Enough

All but one of the secondary education students said that having a solid understanding and knowledge base in the major subject area was extremely important. Many said that having a degree in the subject area prior to their teacher training was a big advantage. In their perception, the lack of a solid knowledge base in the subject area leads to problems in the practicum. Students with a prior degree did

not perceive that they lacked content knowledge, whereas secondary education students without a prior degree perceived a deficit in content knowledge.

> I won't answer a question if I don't think I know the right answer so I would say "okay, I have to look that up, I'll get back to you on it". I said that a lot so after awhile the kids said "you don't know very much do you". I didn't have enough background. I was glad to be done in 4 years, so it would be nice to have a B.A. There's a lot of higher level courses (in the subject area), so there's a lot more thinking going on, a lot more understanding of what actually happened in history. M.

> Having a degree first and then doing the education degree was a definite advantage. My first couple of years at university I wasn't prepared for the arts program let alone to teach others. I am confident in my knowledge base and my maturity level makes a hell of a difference. V.

> The thing I was not trained well in was content. I could have used a lot more content. I'm a social studies major but I could have used a lot more history. Even though I've taken all the courses I needed to take my content is still weak. I had to do a lot of learning the night before or the week before a unit. I feel very poorly equipped to go into a high school. I had a hard time knowing a heck of a lot more than their textbook. It would be nice to have more of an emphasis on your major throughout or a combined B.A. and education degree. R.

> If you don't know your subject material or if you don't really understand it, then that's going to quadruple your stress. Many of the younger students doing a straight education degree find the teaching practicum rough. I think education should be done after an arts or science degree. E.

Knowing enough increased the confidence of the student

teacher.

> Having a background in science made it easier to learn the material before I taught it. It saved me time in preparing. I found I could wing a class if I had to. Sometimes we'd go off the topic or get into a lot of detail and they'd ask me questions. I found I was able to answer them. I was confident in what I knew. G.

2) Feeling Confident

Previous experience working with children or young adults had a positive effect on the practicum experience because it increased the students level of confidence. Building rapport with the pupils was an aspect that was natural for those with previous experience. This was seen as one less thing to have to think about in the practicum.

> They try to give you all the theories through your university courses, but what you really need is first a lot of contact with kids before that. You need to be babysitting or working in a daycare or caring for siblings so you know the kind of situation you're getting into because once you're in the practicum you can't think of those things because you have everything else coming at you. N.

> I probably have more experience than teachers who have taught for the last 3 or 4 years because I've been working with kids coaching. I didn't have to worry about building rapport with the kids. That was one less thing to cause stress and tension. V.

> My job had a lot to do with working with kids so I've had a lot of experience with discipline. I volunteer with a youth group and I've worked at Yellowhead Youth Centre. I've worked with handicapped children so I have a lot of experience

with a lot of different age levels. R.

I was a security supervisor at a coliseum for five years working with kids. I've seen kids space out and stoned. I know the reality of what's out there. I have no problem dealing with the junior high school kids. D.

3) Shifting Roles - Student to Teacher

Students entered into a familiar situation (the classroom) but with a new role to fulfil. Dissonance resulted when students were unsure about how to fulfil the many aspects of the teacher role that are not taught in university classes.

I was nervous about the walking into the staff room for the first time. Not knowing how to dress - whether to carry a briefcase or just my bookbag. Stupid things like that. Should I bring my lunch or do most people go out. All these little things add up. R.

It's stressful going into a new situation where you've never gone and having to stand in front and actually teach these people. The first couple of times you get up in front of the class and teach you're nervous, you're stressed. Pa.

A student teacher is walking into a situation that's already been set up . I come in as a student teacher and I have to have more control. I also have to deal with pulling maps down that I don't know how to pull down, setting up overheads. All these things are cumulative and having a whole classroom of people watching you do these things. When you are self-conscious it's an issue. E.

The kids weren't very often with me. Maybe because she introduced me as a student teacher who would be visiting for 5 or 6 weeks. There were

> parent volunteers in the classroom nearly every day. The kids viewed me as one of these kind of people, so I felt I started at a disadvantage with these kids. N.

One student spoke about the dissonance she experienced when realizing the role of teacher goes beyond the classroom.

> Even when you're out in public. You always wonder who are you going to see? You're getting cut off in traffic and you want to give someone the finger or something but you go, "Oh no, that could be a mom of one of my kids or something"... A lot of us are young. If you ever happen to be in the bar with your kids you have to be professional. If you bump into them, if you see them in the mall, how much do you say to them? Yeah, little things like that. What do you do? But it's, again, it's performance, performance, performance.

4) Perceiving a Lack of Control

Student teachers perceived a lack of control in the classroom. Students had some conflict as to their role. They were student teachers and the class was not really their class.

> I was a student teacher and was being shown that that was my spot. The teacher said, "it's your class now", but the things he did I said to myself, "are you sure?" Me.

> The only stress I ever felt was when I didn't feel that I was in control. When my cooperating teacher still had control and I really felt like I wasn't really doing anything. I didn't have a sense of what I was supposed to do - that's when I felt stressed. Pa.

> I was in a paired teaching situation. I felt like there wasn't room for two bosses. There were too many distractions for the kids. D.

> There was no point for student teachers going to professional days because you just never got anything out of them. We never had a real say in what the school did anyway. Just like staff meetings. There wasn't much point going to them because what I had to say wouldn't affect the following year because I wouldn't be there anyway. G.

5) Experiencing Doubts About Ability to Handle Classroom Management and Discipline

It isn't until students are in an actual classroom situation that they realize the difficulty of classroom management. They experience dissonance as they realize the difficulty of transferring the theory to actual practice.

> In my phase three I was having behaviour problems with one class. Probably three times I lost control of the class. That was mentally stressful. K.

> I was teaching students who were 19, 20 years old - the age of some of my friends. It was difficult for me not kind of getting down to their level sometimes and joking around about things. I had a difficult time establishing my authority. A couple of times I had to really put my foot down so that they knew I was the teacher. That isn't how I normally like to work but I was forced to do that. Hopefully I'll get into a junior high school and I won't get that kind of problem again. R.

> I didn't know what the school policy was on discipline. It took me 4 weeks to figure it out and by then you've already set up your classroom with a certain style which is hard to change with the kids. I'm very timid when it comes to

discipline. Me.

> Stress comes from trying to manage the classroom. You can't learn a basic trade in under three years. How do you expect somebody to walk in and after 4 weeks attempt to do something as incredibly difficult as managing a classroom. E.

Students also experienced dissonance because the reality of pupil behavior in the classroom did not meet their expectations of classroom behavior. They did not feel prepared to handle the discipline problems they faced.

> What they've done is almost turned the entire situation around to where the control instead of being with the teachers being more and more reversed and given to the students. E.

> The university should be aware of what the real stressors are. It's not necessarily lesson planning anymore... It's more dealing with the kids... dealing with kids who don't have a mum or dad at home. It's dealing with them when they're angry, when they're abused, when they just failed a course... when they just don't want to be there. Ma.

> ... It's not the same way it was twenty years ago. The kids don't have the respect. They don't give a heck about the teachers anymore. V.

> ... the reality really hit me on the knocker. I've work with and tutored kids. I came from a group who wouldn't do a lot of things they do in class. Kids are really ignorant. K.

6) Assessing Responsibility

During the course of the practicum students experienced dissonance as they learned to set limits on their

responsibility for their pupils' actions. The students also realized that they were responsible for learning about and setting these limits.

> You have to care but I don't think you can blame yourself and take responsibility for your students. I learned that in the phase III practicum that I didn't learn before then. Everything that happened up until that point I thought, "what am I doing wrong?" I think you have to not take things too personally. V.

> One problem that I can see about myself that I have to get over is I tend to take a lot of responsibility for the kids' actions. If they do something wrong I think, "oh well what did I do?" I'd never been aware of that before but in my other work that's probably one of the reasons why I had to get out of what I was doing. I never had never realized why, and it's something that I'm going to have to work on. K.

> I took it upon myself to go and watch other teachers teach. I learned a lot of things too when I was watching the teacher, and I was extremely motivated to learn new things. I was wondering how kids would behave for somebody else. I realized it's not just me, it's them. I could put it (the behaviour) into perspective and not take it personally. D.

> I was really having trouble motivating the girls. I said, "let's talk." We had a rap session. I realized I was sacrificing getting to know my girls because I thought everybody's watching me all the time. Ma.

7) Being at the Mercy of the Cooperating Teacher

Student teachers said that the biggest influence in the practicum was the cooperating teacher. The attitude of the

cooperating teacher toward the student-teacher appeared to make the most difference in how the student perceived the experience. The amount of responsibility, support, encouragement, and freedom given to the student-teacher was viewed as positive or negative, depending on the needs of the individual student teacher. Dissonance resulted when the needs of the student teacher were not met by the cooperating teacher.

> All I can keep repeating is that the cooperating teacher makes all the difference in the world. The teacher I am with has so much knowledge and experience behind him. That's way more valuable than reading in a text book. He is always positive but gives advice. I'm able to succeed in the classroom because of his knowledge. He's helped and guided me. He has been a major source of support. Pa.

> I know a student in the last round who dropped the practicum because there was a real personality conflict between himself and the cooperating teacher. He just didn't think he could handle it anymore. It has a lot to do with the types of teachers who take student teachers. I was very lucky. My phase three teacher gave me so much leeway. Basically from day one he was in the classroom very little. V.

> The phase 3 teacher I could bring any frustrations or feelings to him and he would help me. When we'd have our call-backs some of my classmates were under a lot more pressure and stress than I was feeling. The people I talked to felt that the differences in the experience was the amount of support that we felt from our cooperating teachers. K.

> The cooperating teachers I had were great. Our teaching styles were very compatible. Other students I talked to said, "well my teacher wants this and this". I felt they were constantly

> trying to please their cooperating teacher and their faculty consultant. They wouldn't speak up. I would go to my teacher if I felt a little stressed and say, "I'm behind on marking, can you take the classes this afternoon?" Then I'd have that afternoon to catch up on things. R.

Students who had differing experiences in the phase two and phase three practicums perceived that the difference was due to the cooperating teacher. This caused dissonance due to the exposure to teachers who differed from the students previous formed image of teachers and teaching as a profession. The students were searching for a role model and often were surprised at what they found.

> The phase II cooperating teacher was very demanding. She was really tough. She said, "I'm doing it because I know you have the potential in you to succeed." but I don't think she understood I was at a point where my morale and my ego was very low. I needed some building up and I wasn't getting it. If you'd asked me after phase 2 I would have said, "I don't think I'm going to teach." I had a really good cooperating teacher for phase 3 which boosted my confidence. Ma.

> The cooperating teacher I was assigned to, I did not feel he wanted to be a teacher. He did the same thing every day. What he did in six days, a normal teacher would have accomplished in 2 periods. There was no respect built into the classroom. For the phase 3 the two men (cooperating teachers) I worked with were great. It was like working with your uncles. They cared about you and were just so nice. I almost felt like it was my own classroom. Every time I wanted to talk about anything they would listen. If I needed to leave early they said, "don't ask me, you tell me, we're co-workers, I'm not your boss." D.

In my first practicum the cooperating teacher was really supportive and he wanted us to try different things. That was really nice. He said I'll watch you in the classroom. If you're handling it, I'll just leave - but don't worry. I'm only a shout away. Usually he would just stand in the hallway. He let me take control of the classroom.

In the phase 3 practicum, the cooperating teacher would just disappear and I'd have absolutely no idea where he was. The kids would ask me questions about marks and I wouldn't have them. I felt the whole time my control of the classroom was being undermined. He had set nothing up for what I should do. He gave me no guidance and he complained that he didn't know what to do with me. I talked to other student teachers and they were getting a lot of time off. Their cooperating teachers would give them time off to prepare. It was very stressful. He didn't give me any ideas and I didn't have a lot of time to prepare. I was really rushing and cramming and I found my lessons weren't very solid. If I met him now, I'd have a hard time smiling and saying hi. He just makes me cringe. Me.

So much depends on the cooperating teacher. My two experiences were like night and day. The cooperating teachers were there for me except the last phase. She had just received an award of excellence and she's very young so everyone looked up to her in this school. She did not provide guidelines for me or talk to me at the end of the day. She never got to know me. I always felt like I was trying to be more like her in order to get a pass for this practicum. She had her ways and they weren't corresponding to what you did, it wasn't exactly proper. Most times I was ready to scream and give up. I thought the teacher gave up on me too because I didn't live up to her standards. That's what I felt the entire way through it. Nothing I did was ever good enough. During the third and fourth week I said, "well, I'm doing the barest minimum because I can't handle this anymore.

The second cooperating teacher I had would stay after school and go over plans. She said, "here's my files and this is what the curriculum guide says and this is the way I usually implement it but if you have other ideas go for it." She set me up beforehand and I felt like she wanted me

> to succeed. She thought it was more beneficial to actually teach than do all the planning beforehand. N.

There was also a difference in the access to resources that the cooperating teacher provided for the student.

> My cooperating teacher said I could use any of his resources. He said, "I'm here to give you suggestions and hints." Whereas I've heard of other teachers who hand the students a book and say go ahead teach. A friend in my class was told, "you can't have any of my (the cooperating teacher) resources. You have to do everything on your own". Pa.

> My cooperating teacher did the minimum. He never told me the back room was the social studies resource room. He never told me where I could put my bag or anything like that. Me.

> When I was in the grade 6 room the cooperating teacher helped me so much. She gave me a book with basically the lesson plans in step-by-step form. In the grade one placement not once did she suggest a book. She wanted me to come up with everything on my own. N.

Students with positive practicum experiences perceived their cooperating teachers to be dedicated to teaching and supportive of student teachers. They tended to credit their positive experience to "luck" in getting a good placement. Therefore, these students too had to reformulate their view of the teaching profession due to their contact with fellow students who had very negative experiences with their cooperating teachers.

8) Fitting Into the School Atmosphere

Although not as influential as the cooperating teacher, the students perceived that the atmosphere of the school affected the practicum experience. For many of these students they were confronted for the first time with school atmospheres that differed from their previous experiences and expectations. This also contributed to dissonance and ultimately reformulating the "image" of teaching as a profession.

> From my experiences in my two practicums you get a really wide variation in whether or not people are willing to share their information with you. At one school there was a lot of stress. The aids were on strike and there was a lot of internal political stress going on - a lot of negative talk. K.

> The feeling of the school was negative. It was a Catholic school. They talked about showing the children Christian values but they weren't showing it to each other. The staff was so divided between the junior high staff and the elementary staff. There was back stabbing and a lot of talking behind the new administrator's back. Pi.

> The teachers in that school always went out of their way to help me. All the science teachers who were in the prep room would give me stuff like different hand outs or different ways to mark. It made me feel very positive about teaching. I look forward to teaching again. It was an honors school so the majority of students were motivated to work. G.

> The first school I was in I was thinking there are problems here. It was a them and us mentality between the staff and the administration and you could sense it. It was sort of a cliquey school too. I'm not shy so I mean it wasn't like I sat in a corner. I got them talking in the staff room on a couple of occasions. The morale of the school is not any good. The administrative principal can't relate to the kids which was pretty stressful for the staff.
>
> I remember striking up a conversation with a first year teacher. The other teachers didn't realize his wife was expecting. He used to sit by himself and there was no effort to get to know him. If you were a first year teacher here it would be a pretty lonely place. B.

9) Feeling Constrained by the Heavy Workload

The heavy workload was perceived as a source of stress by the students. The workload interacted with other responsibilities and activities of the students to become a major source of stress. Dissonance resulted because students began to realize that teaching was more work than realized.

For some students the practicum fills most of their waking hours for the entire time period. Others found the time commitment to be very reasonable. The difference appears to be the time made available to do lesson planning during the school hours. This is dependent on the level being taught and the attitude of the cooperating teacher as well as the atmosphere of the school.

> It was stressful spending so much time getting ready every day, every night. Sometimes I would be spending 5 hours a night and other nights I would be spending 2 hours. I would say an average

of maybe 3 or 4 hours a night. It probably doesn't sound like much but I've got kids too. K.

The practicum was not as time consuming as I thought it was going to be. Lesson planning was easy for me. What was time consuming was just learning the material. One thing I wasn't ready for was how much time marking actually takes. Mine wasn't a true experience because the teacher had a spare every day and she didn't want me teaching the 30s, so I had a lot of time during the day to do my work. Afterwards, I'd spend probably an hour or two a night. I had plenty of time to do the things I've always done. I just didn't have down time to sit and do nothing. R.

My practicum was at a junior high level. You don't have the demands that you do at a high school level. Some of my friends are in a high school and they say they don't get to sleep until 2 or 3 in the morning because they are preparing lessons. In junior high there is a lot more leeway in terms of curricular demands and lesson plans. Pa.

By the third week I was so burnt out it was unbelievable. I just lulled for about two weeks. I couldn't keep it up anymore. I think it was the workload but mainly it was grade one. You had to plan for audio-visual, every mode of information because their attention span was maybe 15 minutes maximum. You had to plan a lot of little activities. They took a lot of time planning. I'm not a very imaginative person. I had to do songs and I just couldn't think of lyrics that the kids would respond to. It was really stressful. Every night I'd have to come up with something for the next day. I was putting in at least a 14 hour day. On weekends I'd go to the library and get books on the subjects we were doing. The teacher wanted at least a book a day on the subject. I also looked for audio-visual material, pictures, etc. N.

10) Confronting Societal Problems in the Classroom

Student teachers are concerned about being able to

handle social problems that pupils may bring into the classroom. The student teachers view the situation in the school as being different from when they were students. They experience dissonance as a result of the difference between how they imagined the school environment to be and how they perceived it to actually be during their practicum placement. They perceived the social problems in the school as being much worse than when they were pupils.

> I read an Ann Landers article today about a teacher in Philadelphia who just described what it was like to teach kids who were bringing guns and knives to school... I had not considered it. I didn't know it got that bad
> ... We talked about how 50% are from broken homes. But it wasn't until I got into the schools and started listening to the kids' stories that I realized yes, it's true.
> ... the day I left, I found out that one of my kid's mom's took off and left her and her 14 year old brother alone in the house. She hadn't paid the rent for April. All this stuff is going on... nobody knows there's stuff like that. Ma.

> My mother stayed home until I was in high school... My mother sat with us every night and made sure we did our homework... She checked up on us all the time. I could join as many clubs as I wanted, but I wasn't allowed to have a job. These kids are working under fourteen. I had a grade eight student who was working. He's thirteen years old... the papers blame things on teachers. Well the parents aren't helping anymore either. D.

> I know from speaking to teachers who have been around for a long time, teachers used to have much more ability to discipline kids... society now says that you can't touch the students.
> ... A lot of people are worried about being

> accused of assault or sexual assault.
> ... When I was at school there just wasn't, I don't know if it wasn't happening but you certainly never knew about it.
> ... I had just had experience with a student who was being beaten at home... Some days he just wouldn't show up to school... You think to yourself do you call his father because you know the father's beaten him.
> ... There's a parental expectation that once the student is dropped off at school he's yours, but they have a real double standard because you can't discipline this kid like a parent can. And again parents can't discipline them anymore either because the child abuse thing comes into play. V.

> In my phase two there was a girl who was upset and I found out her mom and dad had just split up and the day before her dad came over to the house and they weren't home so he killed the dog and left it on the doorstep.
> ... The student teaching I just completed I had a girl who just found out she had Chrones disease. She was always sick.
> ... I'm thinking where to draw the line, where to back off... I decided to take a introductory to guidance course next year. G.

11) Being Aware of Being Evaluated

Students were very aware of being evaluated. This was another source of dissonance for them. The students wanted feedback on their performance but also feared failure because of the importance of a positive practicum evaluation to getting a job.

> Every time my faculty consultant came to watch me my whole flow changed. I'd be nervous and my words would be stuck in my mouth. I couldn't keep my train of thought. I was nervous about being evaluated, being watched. K

> Your evaluation is totally subjective. If you

> don't please your faculty advisor you're dead. If you don't please your cooperating teacher you're dead. The principal has an influence on you. Employers from the school board also add pressure. This is your final evaluation and that's what they look at. I felt like I was trying to please so many people and that really added to the stress. My faculty consultant wanted one thing, the cooperating teacher wanted another, the students and then you have to teach the curriculum on top of that. N.

> Evaluation is a stressful thing. Especially when you think about who's coming in to evaluate you. The faculty consultant, the teachers, the department head, the kids, yourself. It's like an 8 week long interview with these people. You're always on the spot even when you are out in public. You always wonder who you are going to see. When you're getting cut off in traffic and you want to give someone the finger you stop and think that could be the mom of one of the kids. If you happen to be in the bar with your friends you could bump into kids from school - you have to be professional. Its performance, performance, performance and not enough about the teacher and how he or she feels. It's only the performance that's looked at and not the person. Ma.

> If you don't get a good final practicum evaluation...you probably won't get a teaching position as readily as someone who did fantastic on their final evaluation. It's almost totally subjective. N.

Some students were concerned that they didn't get enough feedback along the way on their performance in the classroom.

> The last week we sat down with my cooperating teacher and my advisor and they said, "listen, you have to do this and this and this, otherwise you might not make it". And it was like wow. They couldn't have told me during the previous seven weeks... It seemed like another stress and added pressure. N.

> One thing I did find stressful was that the cooperating teacher didn't give me any feedback. I realized after the fact that she was confident that I knew what I was doing, but I needed the feedback that I was doing things right. I tend to be very critical of myself so I noticed when they didn't say anything. I thought maybe they were trying to be nice. B.

> I was feeling pretty positive, and the first couple of week were really good. And then as time went by I didn't realize that there was a problem. Then 2 days before my evaluation my cooperating teacher tells me that there is a major problem with me. I had gotten all these wonderful evaluations on my lessons and you know very positive stuff and then all of a sudden 2 days before mid-term evaluation she was telling me... That was very devastating. I thought I've been here for four weeks and you've got nothing to say. At the time, I felt it was my fault, and I was the one that was doing everything wrong. Pi.

B. Phase II: Reacting to the Dissonance

1) Recognizing the Dissonance as Stress

During the practicum the students experienced dissonance to a high degree. The students recognized their dissonance as stress. Dissonance in the form of stress was recognized by both physical and psychological symptoms. Recognizing the stress was the first step in reacting to their dissonance.

a) Experiencing Physical Symptoms

Physical symptoms included problems sleeping.

> I recognized I was stressed because I can't sleep. I can't shut off my mind. It goes on and on and often in the middle of the night it's really stupid details that I tend to go over and over. B.

> I have trouble sleeping. It takes me hours and hours (to fall asleep) and then in the morning of course I can't get up. That's a problem because I have thousands of things running through my mind. Pi.

> When I slept I was in school - even in my dreams. Most nights I only got two or three hours of sleep. N.

> I'd sit there waiting to fall asleep and I'd think to myself hey, it would be better if I did this or all of a sudden I'd have eight different plans. Then I'd wake up and have 20 minutes to decide what would work. V.

Female students reported other physical symptoms including losing weight, feeling physically tired, and recurrence of past afflictions.

> I lost a lot of weight. I'm getting married this summer too, so I was worried about the wedding and then I went to my practicum so I was losing weight because of that too. Me.

> Balancing being a mum and the practicum meant some pretty late nights. I was physically tired - just really a deep, deep physical tired. It was odd, I've never really felt that tired before. Its hard to explain. Kind of like a really deep internal tired. Its sort of weird. After a night of sleep I'd still wake up feeling tired. K.

> I came back to university after 11 years. I didn't have a period (menstrual) for six months. The doctor said it was stress related. I also suffer from agoraphobia which recurred. B.

> Stress in the practicum resulted in the recurrence of teeth grinding and tension headaches. They just pound and I know I've had a stressful day. Ma.

b) Experiencing Psychological Symptoms

Many students noticed changes in their psychological health during the practicum. Many reported feeling irritable or agitated. Female students said that crying was a common occurrence during the practicum.

> When I was stressed I became a little irritable - not as patient. There were a couple of times during my third phase where I did feel Ahhhh! this is getting too much. But that never lasted terribly long. R.

> You had to forget your bad days - put it behind you. That was hard because during the last few weeks it kept happening every day. I had a lot of crying periods at home. You get so frustrated you just say, "well I'll throw in the towel". N.

> I never ended up crying at school but usually my mum picked me up. I would get in the car and lose it(begin to cry). I usually cried in the morning before I'd go to school. About 10 minutes before I had to leave I would just break down and cry and cry and say, "I can't go". All my mum could do was just hug me and say, "okay, you've gotten this far and you've done four years already". Me.

2. Seeking Relief

At a conscious level students talked about what they should do to stay healthy. In most cases this differed from their actual coping strategies.

a) Knowing the Importance of Exercise

Exercising was viewed as a desirable activity to deal with stress. However in practise, many student perceived exercise as yet another activity to fit into an already busy schedule. Dissonance resulted when students were not doing what they thought they should be doing to relieve their stress.

> It would be good for me to go out jogging... there's no doubt doing a regular thing in terms of health and exercise would be beneficial.
> ... at the end of the day I would go home and crash out - take a good nap. Then I could really function and do my work (lesson plans for the next day)... So then I didn't need any more than maybe 5 hours to sleep. E.

> I should get back into aerobics... I just can't seem to get motivated to do it... It's really hard when you're busy to try and get motivated... I know that I have to take better care of myself. B.

> Something I want to do is keep myself physically in shape... I think that if I would have been doing that during the practicum maybe I would have been better... but I know that I was just so stressed, it's like I don't have time, I don't have time right now. Me.

> I'd go out for a long walk and just kind of relax. I found even riding a stationary bike really helps. The only problem is I'm not always motivated to do stuff like that even though I know it'll make me feel better. At the time I feel so lousy I don't even want to move. I sit in front of the T.V. and just veg out... You're just in a total doze... not even knowing really what you're watching.
> ... Different people deal with stress in different ways... not everybody likes to eat healthy. Some

> of us are junk food junkies... we don't always feel like exercising... For me I really enjoy reading and that releases my stress too. Pi.

b) Taking Time for Self and Others

In practice many of the students handled their stress by taking time for themselves and for leisure activities with friends.

> I take little breaks in the day, like 10 minutes or half an hour to phone my girlfriend, listen to music or watch a T.V. show... I give myself Friday night off... whether I have things that are pressing or not. I just plan a Friday night with my girlfriend or friends. R.

> If I'm stressed out I take a time out for myself... I'm taking Sunday off to go waterskiing... just time for yourself and family, friends. G.

> ... I take breaks, go out with friends. V.

> I would probably take more time for myself if I was to redo this practicum over again. I would get all my work done during the week and go away every weekend to the woods or something... There's a certain amount of work that you have to put in but I think we always think that there has to be more put into it. Ma.

> ... I make time to relax, even if there are things to be done... I will put myself ahead of some of those things... I need relaxation time like an hour an evening to read... I like to do golf just to relax. Dr.

c) Being Prepared and Organized

Student teachers also found that being prepared and planning ahead helped to relieve stress.

> If I feel like watching a television show I'll just stop what I'm doing and do it. If I want to go to sleep I'll go to sleep... but I make sure that I'm always prepared... you've got to keep your stress level down because as soon as you start freaking out the kids are going to feel it. D.

> You have to be really organized and then find it within yourself what releases your stress... Do something for yourself one hour a day or half an hour... something you enjoy doing, and once a week do a bigger thing... go out to a movie, go out for dinner or take a long bath for 3 hours. Pi.

> .... By that point I had almost all my lessons made so that was out of the way... so basically I'd come home and I'd be able just to do my marking and then relax. Me.

> I find if I'm organized and my lesson plans are clearly written out in advance rather than rushing around the class before, then I don't feel any stress. P.

d) Relying on a Support Network

A support network of people to talk to about their problems in the practicum was very important to the students' sense of well being. Support came mainly from families and friends. Dissonance resulted when the support network also represented a time commitment which added to the students stress. It was thus a double edged sword.

> I had a very good support network of family and friends. That really helped not only to talk to, but also to say, "let's go out"... When I'm in that state (stressed) I don't want to go out anywhere. I want to sit at home and sulk... not get up in the morning... So it was really helpful for people to pull me out. Pi.

> I had a lot of support. I talked to people at work and I talked to D., my boyfriend... It was really hard on our relationship because he just didn't understand why I was doing this to myself. The first call-back was really good. Everyone came to it and just talked about what had been going on (in the practicum)... beefs and bouquets... I knew everyone else was going through the same thing so it was okay. Ma.

> I had added pressure because I'm married... My husband would come home from work... he'd help me cut things out and he colored and stuff for me... he did the laundry and cleaned the house... but he was always saying, "I don't have any time with you anymore"... I'd have to give him a bit of time as well and I didn't have any energy to deal with that aspect as well... I'd come home and burst into tears sometimes... My husband said, "well if it's bugging you that much, quit"... My husband would say to me, "you're not doing anything tonight. We are going out to eat". N.

> ... I had a lot of people to talk to. I had another student teacher in my class... we would get together, compare notes and basically just have a bitch session... My fiance was just going nuts. He couldn't wait for me to be finished (the practicum) because I was so stressed out. I mean I was always complaining... I had one good thing for every ten bad things. Me.

e) Sticking it Out

Students whose practicum experience was very stressful were close to dropping out. Most continued on in the practicum because of the temporary nature of the placement.

The students began a count-down of the days remaining in the practicum.

> I did it (completed the practicum) but I still think that if I had quit it wouldn't be a big deal to me... I was only there eight weeks... I knew it would only be a temporary situation... I'm so close to my degree I might as well continue. S.

> It wasn't bad enough to say, "I need a new placement". It was just something I felt I had to go through with... It was only 4 weeks... It was very stressful... But it was just knowing that it was finishing soon... It was more just a countdown. Okay, I only have 19 days left, 18 days left... It was gruelling. Ma.

> ... One morning I told them I wasn't going to go back (to the practicum school). The only thing that kept me going was that I have a job in September and I just had to get through the next 3 weeks... If I wouldn't have gotten the job and I wasn't getting married this summer I would have quit... I was fed up... I've always wanted to be a teacher and it (the practicum) just totally disillusioned me... I was on a total countdown. It was like ten days left, nine days left, eight days... I had it down to lessons and everything... It was the only way I could cope with it.. The last week I managed to think okay it's just 4 more days, 3 more days... I mean I was still really stressed but I thought, "I'm going to get through this, I've gotten this far". Me.

> My attitude during the fourth, fifth week was just forget it. I came close to quitting. I said, "well if I can't handle it now, what's it going to be like when I really have a full time position?" But I kept with it... I said, "don't worry about it because it's only two more weeks or it's only seven more days. N.

C. Phase III: Reformulating the Image of Teaching and Self as Teacher

The psychosocial process "Realizing the Reality of Teaching" is ongoing throughout the pre-practicum and practicum stages of teacher development. Thus, the reformulation of the "image" of teaching and "self" as teacher was an ongoing result of dissonance. New concepts were incorporated into the pre-training "image". Student teachers reformulated their "dream" of a teaching career to be more in line with the realities of the profession.

This study only included students who completed the phase III practicum component of the program thus omitting students who dropped out of the program prior to or during the practicum. Phase 3 of the "Realizing the Reality" process is displayed in the post-practicum reflection stage of their teacher development.

1) Reflecting on the Teacher Training Experience

Students used various metaphors to describe their teacher training experience.

One student compared the experience to adolescence. This reflects her passage from her initial "image" of teaching to the new image based on the reality of the classroom.

> My teacher training experience could be described as adolescence. Because you think you know it all but you don't. There's going up and down, there's

> good times and bad times... new experiences, new learning... a lot of new things to cope with. D.

Another student viewed the teacher-training experience as the pulling together of isolated concepts into a holistic entity.

> My teacher training experience is something that was sort of separate that you had to pull together... maybe mercury. B.

Yet another student related the process of becoming a teacher as being like a game with lots of ups and downs.

> I think it was like snakes and ladders a little bit, up and down a lot. Lots of ups, lots of downs... but the higher points completely outweighed the negatives. V.

a) Feeling Prepared to Teach

Based on their practicum experiences, student teachers varied on how prepared they felt to begin a teaching career. The dissonance and the reformulated image of teaching resulted in one student's decision not to become a teacher.

> ...at this point in my life I'm not ready to commit myself (to teaching). There is too much time and effort required. I'm not prepared to do that right now. A lot of people get a false conception about teaching. They see teachers as working 6 hours a day, making $30,000 a year and summers off. I didn't realize the extent to which planning time goes into evenings, weekends and summers. S.

The effect of the practicum is evident in the post practicum thoughts of the students. They were both excited and frightened about beginning their teaching career. They now "realize the reality" of teaching to a much greater extent and have some doubts about how prepared they are to move into their new role as teacher.

> I know I'm competent. I know I could do the job and I know I'd do it quite well. I don't feel as prepared as I could be in that's it's going to be a hell of a lot of work. I had a job interview in a high school in Penticton. That scares the hell out of me. You know teaching a full load of high school courses... I feel that if my content was stronger there wouldn't be as much work. R.

> I'm excited to actually begin my career. But in another way, because of the bad experiences I've had (in the practicum) I'm scared to start planning because when you're in there (a teaching position) there's no way home. I hope I get into a situation (school) where's there's a family type of thing - where teachers help you and you have a mentor. N.

> I don't feel prepared to go out and teach right now. ... I know I'm as prepared as anyone else and I can figure it out because I'm not stupid. Probably in some ways I'm much better prepared than some of my younger cohorts because I'm older and I know my stuff... the preparation isn't adequate because the situation isn't adequate... the situation you're being thrown into does not properly support the teacher. E.

> I'm very worried about it (handling a classroom)... I'm very worried about classroom management because I didn't have it in the practicum. Me.

Students with a positive practicum experience were more

confident about their ability to begin their teaching career. One student spoke of his confidence gained from his positive practicum experience.

> There's no question that I could go out and teach right now... I thought maybe I would be able to go out and teach before (the practicum)... but I really feel comfortable and confident and I feel I understand the workings of the schools a lot better than I did (before the practicum)... I think I'm much better now than I was then. V.

b) Speculating on Improving the Experience

During the post-practicum stage of teacher-training the students reflected on their teacher-training with their new realistic image of teaching. The students had some thoughts on how the program could better meet their developmental needs:

1) Reflecting on their student teaching, most students said that more opportunities to observe other teachers would be a valuable learning experience. They wanted an opportunity to observe teachers after they had experienced the "reality of teaching".

> The first practicum... that's at the wrong time. You go in there, they want you to observe how the teacher's do it but you don't really have a clue. They need to put that one at the end when you've actually taught. Then when you go into a classroom you can pick up on how the teacher maintains discipline... I was a biology major and they put me in a drama class and I watched the same play hour after hour. It was a nice break in the week but it wasn't very relevant. G.

> The first practicum you get a biased view of what you see... planning has already been done... what you see doesn't really exist... more exposure is needed to see what the teacher had to go through, the planning and preparation needed to get to that point and the commitment involved. S.

> That's another thing I think should be done too, more observation of other teachers. My cooperating teacher didn't encourage me to go and see other people. Me.

> I think an observation stage is a good idea after our last practicum... because you still want to pick up other people's good points and things like that... see other experiences. D.

2) Students also said that a longer phase three practicum experience would be beneficial. The students perceived that the time spent in a classroom during the practicum is not adequate preparation for their future teaching career.

> If the main emphasis of teaching is getting into a classroom, if that's what teaching is, then we need to spend more time getting into a classroom... so a longer practicum but a practicum not weighted with so much intensity... the evaluation could be done exactly as these are done but the results not being as final. E.

> The final practicum should be lengthened because you have to really become part of a school to see what the problems are... Maybe a student teacher should be assigned to a school for a long time to get to know the kids. D.

> It would have been better to have a longer practicum... I felt like the bonding with the kids didn't work... it's 25 new relationships that you have to build in a short time. N.

> I think the length of time (in the practicum) needs to be extended... more time dealing with kids... a longer continuous time. K.

3) Students were not enthusiastic about the idea of incorporating relaxation and stress coping skills into the educational curriculum.

> I think the tools should be presented to us on how to deal with stress for those who need it but it should be optional. R.

> I think the university could do something on stress management but I don't think it should be shoved down the students throats... I think its got to be presented in a way that the students feel if I need it, it's here for me... but it has to be visible and available. Pi.

> Part of a course should deal with burn-out and stress... a whole course would be like overloading on it. Me.

> The problem is rooted in the entire system so no band-aid solution is really going to resolve it. E.

4) Students also had varying views on returning to the university for a call back each week in order to meet with peers and discuss problems with the practicum.

> If you could take time out during school time and have the teacher cover... just getting away and talking with other people who are going through a similar experience... like take Wednesday afternoon off to meet for coffee or meet at the university... that would really help... just talking helps a lot. N.

> I think it's really important to come back for half a day... It's really important to come back. I don't think it's a good idea to stay at school because there's always people walking around and they could misinterpret something they overheard. Pi.

> I like to have some kind of flow going with my classrooms... Why would I want to interrupt that. I liked the week for call back in the middle... It was like a break. It wasn't as much of an interruption because it was only once... it was easier to plan around. R.

> In phase three it (returning to the university) would have interrupted too much of the process I was developing with my kids, or the rapport with the kids... but phase two I definitely needed it. Ma.

2. Envisioning the Future

Students, now equipped with their reformulated views of teaching and "self" as teacher are perhaps now viewing their future teaching career in a more realistic light. They have in a sense reformulated their dream of a teaching career.

Having just completed their training program, their first concern is with getting a teaching job. Looking ahead slightly they expressed concerns about the difficulty of the first 1 or 2 years of teaching. The students also discussed the possibility of teacher burnout, and some have incorporated the idea of burnout into their "image" of teaching.

A positive practicum experience appears to give students a more positive vision of their future teaching career.

a) Worrying About Getting a Job

Students are concerned about being competitive in a limited job market.

> The way they're talking now, there's not a lot of jobs out there... I don't want to fall back to recreation (her previous job)... There was supposed to be a quota of 40 phys ed teachers and I think there ended up being 60... What going to happen to the extra 20 of us that they claim they weren't going to hire. Ma.

> Getting a job is the first problem. I'm totally finished, I'm in the process of looking for work... I'm trying to stay in the area because of my family commitments here. Edmonton Public outright said that they take only students with the best marks... I really disagree with that because just because you get 9 in every one of your courses, that doesn't mean that you're necessarily going to be a good teacher... It seems sometimes like all that counts is who you know in this market. It's very competitive... With the boards I've applied at I have just been told that my application would be put on file until a position comes available in my area of expertise. K.

> I hope to start working this fall. I'm getting stressed out over applying though. It's getting me worried. I'm at a disadvantage because this is going to be my third BA. I'm getting a little big (on the pay scale) so if I want to go to a rural school I'm in a little bit of trouble. The rural schools don't have as high of budgets. D.

> I think the biggest stress right now is whether I'm going to get a job or not. For getting a job what I've heard is that 30 percent is based on your marks, 30% for an interview and 40% on the practicum. The actual teaching - I think that should be worth more and less on the interview... you can intimidate people in an interview. G.

b) Anticipating the Early Years

In their new reality-based dream of a teaching career, students anticipate that the first one or two years of teaching will be very difficult.

> That would be quite stressful... starting with a new class and all your new lesson plans... the first couple of years... I hope that I get a permanent contract after the first year because then I could relax... it's going to be very stressful waiting because I've got set ideas about teaching kids to be tolerant... but I realize until I get my permanent contract that I will not step on those eggshells. So I'm going to have to learn to keep my mouth shut and to tow the line.

> The first few years are going to be tough because you're just getting started. You have to organize your classroom, bulletin boards, gathering materials. Dr.

> The first couple of years I know it'll be hard. But once you get all your resources together and your files the only problem is you get involved with your students... so you feel it emotionally. N.

> I realize and understand that the first year will be really tough. My family and friends are worried about me... In my first year I see myself pretty stressed. My best friend is a teacher now in an elementary school. Her first year was really tough but now she loves it... I don't see myself as having a nervous breakdown or anything. Ma.

c) Realizing the Possibility of Future Burnout

The students had an awareness of teacher burnout and some anticipate themselves burning out. Burnout for these students has become part of their reformulated image of

teaching. These students see burnout as inevitable if you are a nurturing, dedicated, and caring teacher.

> My husband said, "you'll last five years teaching - that's all you'll last."... I think possibly that I will be back in university in five years for a breather... I like doing things for other people and I'm a real nurturer... that's part of who I am. But you can only give so much. B.

> I think people who are realistic expect teaching to be stressful... I know I'm very idealistic but I'm also a realist... I'm concerned (about burnout) because I'm a very dedicated individual to whatever I do and tend to go toward perfection. B.

> If you care about what you do I think you will have a certain degree of burnout. N.

d) Contemplating a Future Teaching Career

The future outlook of the students is related to the perceived quality of the practicum experience. Those who experienced a high level of dissonance are more likely to foresee burnout in the future. Those who perceived their experience to be very positive have a more positive outlook on their future teaching career. They appear to anticipate a long future in teaching.

Students who had a very positive practicum experience have a more positive outlook on their future teaching career.

> I was talking to another student teacher at that school and we said, "what's going to happen if we

ever get put into a real school?" But I'm pretty confident I can handle it... I can see myself getting bored after twenty years of teaching... I've decided I like teaching... I want to do it, get my money in the bank and retire. G.

I like to teach... I don't see myself quitting in 5 or 10 or 15 years... I may take a sabbatical and work on a master's degree but I don't have any intention to get out of the classroom ever. V.

I'm positive in my outlook... Burnout is not just your job. It's your job and your family life... your spirituality... I'm looking forward to a good life. R.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND SECONDARY REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter the results are discussed in relation to the extant literature in a number of areas. The first area is the decision to teach. The reasons why teaching is chosen as a profession are suggestive of the positive image with which students enter teacher training. The status of teaching is discussed next. Students experienced dissonance when they perceived that teaching had less status than they had anticipated. Dissonance also resulted when students perceived a gap between theory and practice. Literature is discussed which attempts to explain why there is a gap between theory and practice. The next area of literature discussed centers around "reformulating the image of self as teacher". Also included in the secondary literature review is a section on locus of control and stress. This area was included because the students in the present study often perceived their success or lack of success in the practicum as being largely determined by "luck". The final area reviewed is the implications of teaching "image" for teaching training programs.

A. Decision to Teach

Students are attracted to teaching for a variety of reasons. Results of this study indicate that the decision to teach is based on positive school experiences, positive

teacher role models, family members who are teachers, and interest in working with children and young adults. These reasons for teaching are similar to those obtained in a 1975 study and a 1987 study.

Lortie (1975) suggests the following as significant reasons for choosing teaching as a profession: enjoyment in working with young people; pride in performing an important public service; ease of entry, exit and reentry; time compatibility; and psychic rewards emanating from student achievement.

The Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) in 1987 cited the following reasons why students chose teaching as a career: helping children learn and grow; teaching is a challenging field; good working conditions; inspired by favorite teachers; and a sense of vocation and honor of teaching.

B. Status of Teaching

Students in the current study entered their training with a positive view of the profession based on previous classroom experience as pupils. Dissonance resulted early in teacher training. Their experience of "being an education student" presented a contradictory view of teaching. Students realized there was a lack of status in being in "Education". They perceived that they were not treated with respect by clerical staff in their own faculty.

They didn't feel supported by the department and thought that they were not given adequate information to choose courses wisely.

Ritch (1980) also found that preservice teachers are acutely aware of the poor image of teaching. The lack of status accorded the teaching profession can be addressed by first examining the atmosphere of the universities where teachers train. Education students perceive that they are considered the least capable on campus. Ritch (1980) says she experienced sharp differences in status when she transferred from an honors English program into Education. As an education student she felt she was assumed to be of mediocre intelligence. In light of the perceptions of the education students in the present study, the status of education students has not changed. What is important is the effect on teachers self esteem from the lack of respect education students receive from the university community.

Goodlad, 1990, found that overall, education faculty members viewed students in their teacher education programs as being of average scholastic ability compared with students on the campus generally. Students were well aware of the negative perceptions and most had experienced strong negative pressure regarding their career choice from parents, peers, former teachers, and even their current supervisors of student teaching.

The self-image and morale of people in large part determines the degree to which they are able to be productive. Cassel (1984) lists the negative image of the present school system as one of the five critical factors fostering teacher burnout. The present study suggests that the university system is a factor in fostering the lack of self-esteem and low morale of teachers. The students enter teacher training with a positive albeit unrealistic view of education. The perceptions are challenged and apparently a negative view develops. Others feel a need to justify their decision to teach.

Lanier and Little (1986) cite the works of Sykes who points to other contributing factors. He questions how prospective teachers can maintain optimism when there is decreased enjoyment from work with less responsive and appreciative young people, a deteriorating public image of teaching as an important service, an erosion of material benefits, and teaching environments that are too often disruptive, dangerous, and bureaucratic to the point of frustration. These problems contribute to the frustrations encountered in the beginning years of teaching and even in student teaching. The high rate of teachers who leave the field early in their careers can be attributed, in part, to the reality shock of early teaching assignments.

C. The Gap Between Theory and Practice

In the current study, students perceived that they approached student teaching with an inadequate knowledge of pupils and classroom procedures. Students also thought that their courses contained too much theory which could not be easily transferred to the practicum situation. Wubbels (1992) says that many teacher education students have negative attitudes towards theory presented in their education classes. They think that these theories contribute little to good teaching or are counterproductive to good practice (Lasley, 1980).

There appears to be a problematic gap between theory and practice. Theories and skills learned in courses are often not used in the practicum. Two theories have been proposed to account for the poor transfer of theory to teaching practice.

The first explanation is that scientific knowledge cannot be used directly in practice. The context of practice differs from the context in which the theory was created. Theory is in essence an abstraction of reality whereas practice is concrete (Fieman-Nemser & Ball, 1984). Following from this explanation, one of the tasks of teacher educators should be to adapt the language of scientific theories so that it is easier to use it in practical situations.

A second view is based on a cognitive psychological perspective. If theory is taught without a direct connection with practice teaching, the result will be a compartmentalization in memory (Gagne & White, 1978). To be available when needed, knowledge needs to be well organized or structured. Therefore there needs to be good connections between the theory and practical parts of knowledge. Compartmentalization makes theories learned in classes poorly accessible in practice (Anderson, 1985). Following from this point of view, further integration of theoretical components and student-teaching components are implied.

Wubbels (1992) extends the cognitive psychological line of reasoning. Humans are seen as actively constructing their understanding of experiences using already existing frameworks. As stated previously student-teachers enter teacher education with knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that are rooted in experiences. These act as frameworks to interpret what happens in the classroom. Corporal (1988) interprets the poor transfer of theory to practice as a lack of integration of the theories with the perceptions of student teachers. The importance of knowing more about student teachers' preconceptions is becoming more recognized.

These preconceptions show a remarkable resistance to change (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). The stability can be explained by the long experiences that student teachers had

as pupils in education. The cognitive psychological perspective explains the stability in terms of declarative vs. procedural knowledge. Cognitions that direct action are primarily procedural knowledge. This type of knowledge is far more difficult to change than declarative knowledge (Anderson, 1983). The procedural knowledge needed to succeed in the student teaching practicum is drawn from the student's image of teaching. The theory and skills learned in the classroom are often not yet integrated into the teaching image and are thus perceived as not applicable by the student teachers during their practicum.

Wubbels (1992) makes the case that the synthesis of experiences into an image is mainly the function of the right hemisphere of the brain. The language of the right hemisphere is imagery, metaphor and symbols. It represents synthesis and totality. The language of the left hemisphere is definitional, logical, analytical and interpretive. The right hemisphere of the brain is difficult to reach via logical left hemisphere language. This is the language used in classes at universities. Consequently, teacher education programs may fail to influence students' preconceptions.

Goodlad, 1990, says that a major restructuring has to occur in regard to the relationship between theory and practice. In teacher education programs as in schools, lecture is the dominating instructional practice. Some field experience accompanies the lecture but rarely are the

two joined. Goodlad says that the analysis of practice should come first. The theory and principles should be brought to the practice rather than teaching the theory first and hoping that the students will see the relationship.

D. Reformulating the Image of Self as Teacher

In general, students feel they approach student teaching with inadequate knowledge of pupils and classroom procedures. They have an idealized view of pupils and an oversimplified picture of classroom practice. Preservice teachers use their own experiences as pupils as if these were prototypical and generalizable. Personal history-based beliefs constitute a sample of one. The use of self as a prototype leads preservice teachers to believe that pupils are essentially like themselves.

McNeely and Mertz (1990) found that at the beginning of a semester student teachers with a high sense of efficacy spent a great deal of time planning elaborate lessons with several planned activities. By the end of the student teaching they saw pupils as adversaries, were obsessed with class control, spent less time preparing lessons and limited lessons to single activities. Student teachers' apparent disillusionment may have been caused by their idealized views of pupils and classrooms. Student teachers are often unprepared to deal with class control and discipline

problems. As a result they become focussed on class control and as a result their attitudes towards pupils become more custodial and controlling (Kagan, 1992).

By interacting with pupils, student-teachers begin to look at their personal beliefs and images. In so doing, they can see where they are incorrect or inappropriate. The knowledge acquired from pupils can be used to modify, adapt and reconstruct the image of self as teacher.

Students in the present study experienced dissonance during the practicum when their personal beliefs about teaching were challenged by the reality of the classroom situation. Dissonance also resulted when the cooperating teacher's beliefs were not consistent with those of the student teacher.

Kagan (1992) says that as the image of self as teacher is adapted and reconstructed, student-teachers tend to focus on their own behaviors rather than those of their pupils. Students in the present study experienced this shift as they realized their limited responsibility concerning the actions of pupils.

Johnson (1992) states that practice teaching presents an opportunity for refining and clarifying images of teaching. Practice teaching places parameters on the practical expression of teaching images. Dissonance results when students perceived an incompatibility of the classroom in which they were placed with their own image of teaching.

The discomfort results in a restructuring of the image of teaching.

Hollingsworth (in press) found that change occurred in student teachers' personal beliefs and images only when a direct challenge to personal beliefs occurred. The challenge created cognitive dissonance. In the absence of cognitive dissonance, learning among student teachers remained shallow and imitative. Students placed with cooperating teachers who facilitated the integration of new knowledge with the students' preexisting beliefs appeared to experience the greatest professional growth.

In the present study students were more satisfied with the experience if their cooperative teacher was warm and supportive. So, although cognitive dissonance may be ultimately beneficial for growth, it is uncomfortable and stress producing.

This also suggests that an effort to eliminate stress from student teaching would not be entirely beneficial to the development of teachers. However, strategies to deal with the stress could be taught and utilized during the practicum. The theory of stress management could immediately be incorporated into the students' procedural knowledge which would then carry over into their future teaching career.

E. Locus of Control and Stress

Preservice teaching provides prospective teachers an opportunity to confront events which could be sources of stress in their later careers. The appraisal of events as being stressful is determined in part by an individuals' locus of control (Sadowski & Blackwell, 1985). Locus of control refers to the individuals' expectancies that events in their environment are contingent on their behaviour. People with an internal locus of control view their actions as instrumental in producing outcomes. Those with an external locus of control see their actions as determined by fate, luck or powerful others.

As stated previously, student teachers in the current study perceived their success and lack of success in the practicum as being largely determined by "luck". Both students with positive practicum experiences and those with negative experiences thought that luck was involved in getting a good school and good cooperating teacher. Most of the students could be said to have an external locus of control. The stress experienced in student-teaching was related to the quality of the placement rather than the locus of control.

The results of the Sadowski & Blackwell 1985 study found that student teachers with an internal locus of control saw themselves as able to influence their teaching environment and appraised events as less stressful than

those with an external locus of control. This suggests that internally oriented student-teachers might be more effective in the classroom than their external oriented counterparts.

F. Implications for Teacher-Training Programs

Students come to their formal studies of teaching with powerful personal history-based lay theories about good practice (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991). Lay theories are beliefs developed naturally over time without the influence of instruction. Lay theories represent tacit knowledge developed over long years of participation in and observation of classrooms (Lortie, 1975). Thus, preservice teachers enter programs of professional study with a quantity of knowledge about schools, classrooms and pedagogical practices. They already possess experience based information on every topic or concept taught in teacher education programs.

According to Holt-Reynolds (1992) these personal history-based lay theories could act as helpful schemata that preservice teachers can expand as they pursue their formal studies of teaching. However, there are times when the lay theories are not contextualizing and helpful but are powerful, misleading and unproductive as resources for learning.

If teacher educators want to influence those they teach, it may be necessary to explore the entry beliefs the

students have developed about "good" teaching. The rationales underlying preservice teachers' decisions could be better understood and addressed by teacher educators. The role of teacher educators could perhaps centre more around professionalising the existing rationales of students rather than training teachers with the assumption that they enter their training without preconceived ideals of teaching. Teacher educators could dialogue with preservice teachers and work with them to evaluate and adjust beliefs. The well established, tenacious and powerful beliefs of students could be shared with educators. Differences between beliefs they established as pupils and principles being suggested for teachers could be explored. It would be beneficial if educators respected and utilized the beliefs of preservice teachers as standards against which to check research-based principles.

Rather than using an understanding of the knowledge and beliefs held by student teachers as a starting point, teacher education programs have traditionally been planned on the basis of competencies teachers are thought to require (Carter, 1990).

Students would apparently benefit from an opportunity to question their prior beliefs about teaching, learning, schools, and pupils. Caution needs to be taken here because the preservice teachers want to be teachers in part because of the lay beliefs they hold. Care needs to be taken to

preserve some of what is valuable to the student about the beliefs.

Integrating the history-based beliefs with theory may be possible in teacher education programs that support preservice teachers while challenging their beliefs across all course and field work.

Goodlad, 1990, had devised a comprehensive plan for reforming undergraduate education. His results are based on data collected over a five year period from questionaires filled out by thousands of future teachers near the end of their preparation programs and hundreds of hours of interviewing presidents, deans, faculty members and students. Goodlad says that teacher education programs must be completely redesigned. He says that those who teach education courses, those who teach content, and those who supervise the student teachers should be put into one faculty and given equal authority. Goodlad advocates that all student teaching should be in a professional development center that is operated by both the university and the school district. The present isolation of cooperating teachers results in student teachers who become clones of their cooperating teachers, thus perpetuating present practices.

Schon (1987) believes that educating reflective practitioners is a valuable, necessary aim of teacher education. Schon uses the term "knowing-in-action" to

describe the type of knowledge teachers use in classroom situations, emphasizing the complexities of interactive teaching and thinking-in-action. This type of knowledge is built from personal and professional experiences, and is not readily articulated by the teacher. Teacher educators may benefit from exploring the evolving practical knowledge of student teachers so that programs can be established which assist the students to develop, understand, articulate, and utilize that practical knowledge. The starting point is with the student teachers. There is a need to further explore teaching as the student-teachers see it - to understand practical knowledge as it is held and used by developing teachers. Britzman (1989) makes a case to hear the "voices" of preservice teachers in an effort to understand the process of teaching and learning from their perspective. Only from this starting point can educators avoid imposing potentially inappropriate theoretical frameworks derived from the knowledge of researchers or from experienced teachers (Eisner, 1988).

The present study was an effort to hear the voices of student teachers in order to understand their educational experience. An understanding of the students perspective is one of many steps to developing strategies for more effective teaching in education programs. The present study explored with the students their perceptions of the teacher-training experience. From the individual descriptions

themes emerged. The themes that emerged are glimpses of the images of teaching held by the student teachers. Images are unique for each individual and evolve from previous experiences. Generating the combined images of the student teachers in the study clarifies areas of student concern that need to be addressed in education programs.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the teacher-training experience from the students' perspective. A three phase psychosocial process emerged from this study referred to as "The Realizing the Reality of Teaching" process. Students entered their teacher training with a positive image of teaching which developed from their personal histories as pupils in the education system. Dissonance arose when their image of teaching was challenged. Student teachers experienced dissonance, reacted to the dissonance, and reformulated their image of teaching and themselves as teachers.

The decision to teach was made early in life based on their own positive school experiences as pupils. Positive teacher role models and family members who were teachers helped the students to formulate a positive view of the teaching profession.

Early in the teacher-training program the students were confronted with less positive views of teaching. The experience of "being an education student" caused them dissonance as they realized there was a lack of status in being in "Education". Even within their own faculty the students perceived that they were not treated well by

clerical staff in student records. They did not feel that they were given the information required to make informed decisions about their classes.

As their teacher training continued they discovered that much of the course work was theory-oriented and could not be easily transferred to the practicum situation. The students also discovered that many of their professors had not taught pupils in a classroom for several years and they perceived that the information received in their classes did not fit with the reality of teaching today.

The practicum component of the teacher-training program was perceived to be the most important aspect. Dissonance resulted when the student's anticipation of the practicum experience differed from the actual experience. Their expectations were based on their own school experiences as well as what they had heard from professors and students from previous years.

Students who viewed the practicum as a learning experience tended to experience less stress in the practicum than those who viewed the practicum as a test of their teaching abilities.

The students noted a number of conditions that influenced the dissonance they experienced during the practicum experience.

1. Knowing Enough

Students felt that having a solid understanding and knowledge base in the major subject area was extremely important. Many felt that having a degree in the subject area prior to teacher-training was a big advantage.

2. Feeling Confident

Previous experience working with children or young adults had a positive effect on the practicum experience. Building rapport with the pupils was natural for those with previous experience and therefore this was one less aspect to have to think about in the practicum.

3. Shifting Roles - Student to Teacher

Students entered into a familiar situation (the classroom) but with a new role to fulfil. Dissonance resulted when students were unsure about how to fulfil the many aspects of the teacher role which are not taught or cannot be taught.

4. Perceiving a Lack of Control

Student teachers perceived a lack of control in the classroom. They had some conflict as to what their role was. They were student teachers but the class was not really their class.

5. Doubting Abilities to Manage the Classroom

Students experienced dissonance because the reality of pupil behavior in the classroom did not meet their expectations of classroom behavior. They did not feel prepared to handle the discipline and classroom management problems they faced. The students experienced dissonance when they realized that they could not rely on the theoretical knowledge learned in their classes. Instead they had to adjust their approach to fit the unique situation of the class.

6. Assessing Responsibility

Many of the students learned over the course of their teacher-training to take responsibility for their own "learning" experience. They also learned the limits to responsibility concerning the actions of the pupils.

7. Being at the Mercy of the Cooperating Teacher

The biggest influence in the practicum was the cooperating teacher. The attitude of the cooperating teacher toward the student-teacher appeared to make the most difference in how the student perceived the experience. The amount of responsibility, support, encouragement and freedom given to the student-teacher was viewed as positive or negative depending on the needs of the

individual student teacher.

8. Fitting in With the Atmosphere of the School

Although not as influential as the cooperating teacher, the atmosphere of the school also affected the practicum experience of the student teacher. Both the cooperating teacher and atmosphere of the school in which they were placed were perceived by the students as being a matter of "luck".

9. Managing the Workload

Demands on time for the students although partially based on personal traits, were also influenced by the particular placement. For some students, time was made available during school hours to do lesson planning and grading. For other students all planning and grading had to be done on their own time after school hours.

10. Confronting Social Problems in the Classroom

Students experienced dissonance as a result of the difference between how they imagined the school environment to be and how they perceived it to be during their practicum experience. They perceived the social problems in the school as being much worse than when they were pupils.

11. Being Aware of Being Evaluated

Students were very aware of being evaluated

and this was another source of dissonance for them. The students wanted feedback on their performance but also feared failure because of the importance of a positive practicum evaluation to getting a job.

During the practicum some students experienced dissonance to a high degree. In most cases, students recognized the dissonance as stress. Dissonance in the form of stress was recognized by both physical and psychological symptoms. Physical symptoms included: problems sleeping; weight loss; feeling physically tired; and recurrence of past afflictions. Psychological symptoms of stress perceived by the students included: feeling irritated or agitated; feeling frustrated - wanting to quit; and crying bouts.

Throughout the practicum students were often confronted with cooperating teachers, school atmospheres, and classroom social problems that differed considerably from their early-formed image of teachers and "teaching" as a profession. Throughout the practicum experience their images of the teaching profession and themselves as teachers were continually challenged and had to be reformulated as they reacted to the resulting dissonance.

Students attempted to alleviate their feelings of dissonance in a number of ways. On an intellectual level

students knew what they needed to do to stay healthy under stress. Exercising and eating nutritiously were cited as desirable activities. However in practice the students found it hard to get motivated to exercise. It was perceived as yet another activity in an already busy schedule. In practice most of the students handled their stress by taking time for themselves and for leisure activities with friends and family. A support network of people to talk to was very important to the students' sense of well being. Families, although a source of support also represented a time commitment which added stress during the practicum.

Most students, regardless of the dissonance experienced, chose not to drop out of the practicum. Most preferred to "stick it out" because of the temporary nature of the placement. The 8 or 12 week practicum is the end of a four-year degree. Most felt that finishing the placement and getting their degree was very important.

The metaphors and similes used by the students to describe their practicum experience suggested the dissonance encountered by the students. Most reflected the idea that the experience was emotionally demanding. Students emerged from the experience with a new image of themselves as teacher - or in some cases with a view that they no longer wanted to be teachers. The students were able to reflect on the practicum experience and offer suggestions to improve

the experience.

Students varied on how prepared they felt to begin a teaching career. Based on their practicum experience, many felt ambiguous about their ability to begin a career. Students with a positive practicum experience were confident about their future in teaching. They anticipated a long and successful career. The experience of the practicum was integrated into the image of teaching and self as teacher.

Students were concerned about the teacher job market and anticipated problems in finding a job. They also anticipate the difficulties they may encounter in the first year or two of teaching. They have emerged from their teacher-training with a more realistic "image" of teaching.

The students had an awareness of teacher burnout and some anticipated themselves burning out. Students who experienced a great deal of stress in the practicum were more likely to anticipate teacher-burnout. The possibility of burnout has been incorporated into the teacher "image" of these students. Those who experienced less stress seemed to be more able to formulate an image of themselves as successful career teachers. These students anticipate long teaching careers.

Student teachers were overwhelmed by the demands to perform in the classroom; the necessity to solve their own problems, the difficulty in relating theory to practice, and the challenge of using innovative classroom teaching

strategies. Students were so overwhelmed by these demands and their lack of procedural knowledge that they had no time to engage in introspection.

There appears to be a gap between the expectations of students' skills held by university faculty and their actual skills. Student teachers are expected to function as advanced beginners when in fact they possess only minimal survival skills. University professors are not providing student teachers with procedural knowledge and student teaching is being used primarily to acquire this knowledge from cooperating teachers.

Student teaching is affected by many school and classroom variables: the nature of pupils, parental attitudes, availability of materials, communication between school and university personnel, attitudes of teachers in a school, and the personal relationship that develops between a novice and the cooperating teacher. Student teachers are confronted with an overwhelming number of things they have to do. If these tasks can be limited, the situation could be perceived to be more under control.

There appears to be an absence of a coherent knowledge base underlying classroom practicum experience. The students perceive a lack of connection with university course work. It would be beneficial if student teachers had an opportunity to confirm and validate their images of themselves as teachers and to acquire knowledge of pupils to

modify the images. Perhaps they need to experience dissonance and question the appropriateness of their history based image of teaching.

B. Contributions of the Study

There is a paucity of research in the area of teacher education that hears the voices of student teachers to understand their educational experience. This project was conducted to derive information about the personal perceptions of the individuals' experiences. To my knowledge, the present study is the first of its kind to examine the entire teacher training experience from the students' point of view.

The information gained from this study in conjunction with dialogue and other information can be utilized in developing strategies for more effective teaching in education programs. The study has identified areas that the students perceived as problem areas. Recommendations for teacher training based on this study follow in the next section. Student teachers could utilize the data in this study to normalize their experiences in the practicum. Being aware of the issues beforehand could make them more prepared to handle difficult situations when they arise. Exposure to previous students' symptoms, causes and strategies to deal with stress could sensitize future students to their own stress management.

This study supports much of the very recent work in the area of the image of teaching formed by personal history based beliefs. The idea of dissonance as a requirement for changing the image to incorporate new teaching and learning ideas is a change of perspective. I began the study with the idea of discovering ways to alleviate student teacher stress. I thought that strategies to deal with stress during student teaching could then be carried into future teaching careers with the result being less teacher burnout. The present study suggests that education students have now included teacher-burnout as part of their teaching profession schema. The idea that teaching is stressful and difficult is pervasive in our culture. Is teacher burnout inevitable or has its expectation in the beliefs of student teachers escalated the problem?

The present study has added to the data base in the area of preservice experiences from the students' perspective.

C. Recommendations for Teacher Training

The following recommendations are ways that preservice education programs could perhaps better meet the needs of future teachers.

1. It would be beneficial to educators if a primary goal of preservice programs was to increase the procedural knowledge of student teachers. Consideration could be given to more opportunity for

field experience, a longer practicum component and a closer integration of course work and practicum components. Increased emphasis on procedural knowledge may decrease the students' frustrations with the perceived abstract content of education courses. Thus, the transfer of skills and theory from campus to practicum may be improved.

2. I believe that students need to develop their image of self as teacher and include in this image positive health promoting behaviors and attitudes. Strategies for self-reflection could be encouraged. Students could be helped to examine their own biographical histories and how they fit with the theories of teaching learned in the classroom. Practice teaching may become more focused and meaningful if personal images are explored prior to the practicum. Discussions about images of teaching may help the student to understand the process of integrating the images with new learning. Inviting authentic talk necessitates a course or seminar without a grade. More emphasis could be placed on keeping journals, documenting critical incidents and participating in group discussions about concerns, opinions and insights.

3. The low status accorded to teachers plays a role in teacher burnout. Students perceive the status of

"education" students on campus to be low. Perhaps increasing the teacher's knowledge base may increase the self-esteem of teachers and increase their feelings of adequacy. Consideration could be given to increasing the students' subject knowledge. This might alternately contribute to an increase in the status of education students on campus and ultimately the status of teaching as a profession.

4. In the present study there were students who realized during the phase three practicum that they really didn't want to be teachers. Perhaps students could be taught or counselled about the realities of teaching prior to entering teacher training. Students in the present study did not think they were given adequate guidance in choosing courses. Consideration could be given to assigning an advisor that students can see about course choices, practicum placements, and any academic or practicum-related problems they are experiencing throughout the program. A neutral advisor, who is not directly involved in their practicum course, would enable students to feel more at ease about discussing problems.

5. Some course time prior to the practicum could be allotted for the training of skills to enable the student to identify stress situations and generate appropriate adaptive responses to those situations.

Perhaps by including self care training during student-teaching, the effects will carry over into future teaching careers.

6. Student-teachers feel fairly isolated during the practicum. They have the dual role of student and teacher. The establishment of peer support groups that could meet back on campus once a week to discuss their practicum experiences would give students the freedom to really express their doubts and concerns in an unthreatening atmosphere with others who are in the same situation. There could be an advantage to these peer groups being fairly informal without a faculty member. Perhaps graduate counselling students could be utilized to facilitate the groups, which would be of benefit to both education students and counselling students.

7. In this study the influence of the cooperating teacher was seen by the students as being the most important variable in the practicum. The students' experiences varied greatly depending on the approach of the cooperating teacher. It is necessary for cooperating teachers to be better prepared and informed about the practicum requirements. Such training could also provide students with more equitable practicum placements with respect to expectations, work loads,

and support given. Improved communication and cooperation between the university, the student, and the school may lessen the compartmentalization of the student teacher's experience. Consideration could be given to holding three-way conferences prior to and at least twice during the practicum. It may be beneficial to student teachers if cooperating teachers were given equal authority with practicum supervisors in planning the teaching practicum.

8. Education students express the need for more exposure to schools early in their training. Consideraton could be given to integrating students into schools from the beginning of their program. Education courses could then use the students' lived-experience of working with children as well as theoretical abstractions. The experience gained from working with children has an added effect of one less "new" variable to have to focus on during the practicum.

D. Future Research

There is a rich potential for research in this area. Some suggestions for future research projects follow.

1. The present study and other literature suggests that cognitive dissonance is perhaps desirable in student teaching because it encourages growth in the

students image of teaching practices. Cognitive dissonance results in a reconstruction of history-based beliefs. More research is needed in the area of cognitive dissonance in teacher training so that better use can be made of this naturally occurring phenomena.

2. More research is necessary to determine the effect of the biographical histories and personality influences on successful student teaching experiences. Analysis of the use of peer support groups, reflective practices such as journal keeping, and stress counselling could be explored in student teaching practicums.

3. Longitudinal research following students through their teacher training and into the profession would allow for greater insights into the interactions of personality and situational factors involved in teacher burnout. There could be entry level assessments of coping skills, personality characteristics and beliefs of students. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches could be utilized to assess the influences of coping skills, personality characteristics and beliefs on the teacher training experience and the future teaching career. Follow ups could be conducted three years and six years after graduation.

4. A questionnaire could be developed based on this study and additional studies. The questionnaire could

be distributed to a large sample of students to better determine the effect of pre-entry beliefs on the teacher training experience.

5. Graduating student-teachers perceive that they lack adequate subject knowledge. More research is needed in the area of subject-matter knowledge. Will teachers increase their knowledge by explaining it to others? How does teachers' understandings of their subjects change? How can educational institutions help to deepen the subject-matter knowledge of their students?

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Age
Area of Specialization
Marital Status

---

1. Why did you choose to become a teacher?

2. Tell me about your teacher training experience?

3. How did it compare to your expectations?

4. Did you experience stress/anxiety during your teaching training?

5. How do you recognize your stress?

6. How do you handle stress/anxiety?

7. Do your professors address the issue of stress/teacher burnout in your classes?

8. How do stress and teacher burnout relate to personality?

9. Have you had any health problems that you believe are related to stress?

10. If you were going to change your health habits in some way, what changes would you make?

11. Do you feel well prepared to begin teaching full-time?

12. What problems do you foresee in your future teaching career?

13. Would you please provide a metaphor that describes your teacher training experience?

14. What do you think the university can do, if anything, to help prevent teacher burnout later on?

Appendix B: Consent Form

Project: Education Students' Perspectives on Their Teacher-Training Experience

Investigator: Lynda Grant
Department of Educational Psychology, U of A.

The purpose of this study is to investigate education students views on the relevance of their teacher training experience to their future development as educators. I am particularly interested in sources of stress in teacher training and the student teachers' strategies to alleviate stress. The purpose is to gain a greater understanding of the education students' experience, with the hope of formulating some recommendations to help prevent teacher burnout.

You are being asked to participate in an interview of approximately one hour. The interview will be audio-recorded. All information will be kept confidential.

This is to certify that I, _____ hereby agree to participate as a volunteer in the above named project.

I hereby give permission to be interviewed and for these interviews to be tape-recorded. I understand that, at the completion of this research, the tapes will be erased. I understand that the information may be published, but that my name will not be associated with the research.

I understand that I am free to deny any answer to specific questions. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and terminate my participation at any time without penalty.

_____ _____
(participant) (researcher)

_____

_____ _____
(address) (date)

(Adapted from Field and Morse, 1985).

Appendix C: Oath of Confidentiality

Project: Education Students' Perspectives on Their Teacher Training Experience
Investigator: Lynda Grant
Department of Educational Psychology, U of A

I, _____, swear that I will not, without undue authorization, disclose or make known any matter or thing which comes to my knowledge by reasons of my involvement in service of this project.

_____
(signature)

Date

_____

Witness.

_____

Appendix D: Project Work Plan

Time Period	Activities
Jan. - April 1992	Registered in a qualitative research course.
	Development of the research question.
	Brief review of the literature.
	Contacted Dean of Practicum to arrange access to sample population.
	Visited practicum classes to explain study and get volunteer participants.
	Pilot study as a requirement for qualitative research course.
May - June 1992	Submission to Ethics Review Committee, Department of Educational Psychology.
	Development of interview guide based on pilot study and literature review.
	Writing of research proposal.
	Contacting participants by phone to to arrange an interview time.
	Conducting interviews with participants.
	Completion of field notes by investigator.
July - August 1992	Translation of audio recordings into written transcripts.
	Comparison of transcript with audio-recordings by investigator.
	Open coding of transcripts by investigator.
	Review of coding by supervisor.

	Color coding interviews, coding comparisons, grouping codes - axial coding.
	Development of emerging codes, patterns, themes.
	Review of coding by secondary coder.
	Review of findings by supervisor.
Sept. - Dec. 1992	Preparation of final report.
	Comparison of study findings with the literature.
	Review of the study findings with friends/associates who are teachers.